

A
Bunch
of
Little
Thieves

David S. Greenberg



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Mrs. Ben F. Lindsey

To The Hon. Judge Ben Lindsey

Whose work has been an
inspiration to many who, like
him, have desired to help make the
world better.

David S. Greutberg





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A BUNCH OF LITTLE THIEVES

By DAVID S. GREENBERG

With an Introduction by
PROFESSOR FREDERICK G. BONSER,
Teachers College, Columbia University



Illustrated by
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INTRODUCTION

The story of the "Bunch of Little Thieves," is fiction, but it is apparent that the author has broad personal experience with the conditions in reformatories. The work concerns itself largely with what can be done to bring out and develop the latent "will to be good," of our bad boys, who are shown to be *victims* rather than *enemies* of society. It portrays the possibilities of their return to that society as members whose lives may be a satisfaction to themselves, and a benefit to the race. It shows that the problem of securing the opportunity for really helpful work and the coöperation of the management is far harder than that of securing the response and coöperation of the boys themselves.

But what the author strives to make most clear is that the problem of the bad boy is not apart from the problem of life itself and all that that implies, and that it can not be solved by those who do not understand the desires and aspirations of the human race. Behind the boy are the poverty and misery of the degraded home and the widowed mother; behind are the inefficient public schools which rate boys in the mass and have no respect for particular aptitudes, interests, or vocational needs; behind are the police who know little save the cold de-humanizing law of overcoming by fear and physical force; behind are the dives, graft, and the vice of the underworld; behind are the greed and pelf of power of the political sharks who live upon the debauchery of those below them and the perfidy of those above;

behind are the wealth and arrogance and pharisaism of those who control vast fortunes, subvert laws to their own designs, and count other men as but so much fuel to the fires of their ambitions and greed—system—system—system—de-humanized institutions where the individual is lost in the mass, where each stratum of life points to the next higher as the source of its misfortunes until those are reached who stand *highest* in wealth and power and authority whose only reply to the charge is, "and what are you going to do about it?"

The overt act which leads to commitment to a so-called reformatory institution too often means but the real beginning of training for a criminal career rather than the end of it. In reformatories, whether for old or young, the program for correction has very largely been based upon the old idea that the person to be reformed is one whose very nature is depraved, who has no good in him, and who must be literally trained into subservience by the application of physical force and the fear of its brutal consequences. A man is often chosen as superintendent or instructor or foreman in such an institution because of proven ability as a successful master of men by strong arm methods. The committed boy is treated as a confirmed enemy of society, as one who is wholly unresponsive to the appeals of human sympathy and ideals. No pains is spared to make him feel this attitude. His every act is treated with suspicion and distrust. He is spoken to and of as a *little thief*, a *little tough*, or a *little criminal*. The regime under which he lives forces him into a cringing, resentful attitude, and he goes out a confirmed enemy of society, becoming

such as the result of moody reflections, and not because of the casual conditions of the environment which often accounts for his commitment.

Modern thinkers, actual workers in the reform movement, have discovered that the natures of the greater portion of juvenile offenders are entirely the same as those of other children, that conditions of environment, social and economic, are largely responsible for juvenile delinquency, that the substitution of favorable surroundings for unfavorable are often sufficient to remove all tendencies to criminal conduct, and that juvenile offenders do respond with all of the simple and virtuous natures of the common, adolescent childhood when appealed to in a truly human fashion. All of these discoveries of the present century, in which the work of Judge Lindsey, and Jane Addams has played a most important part, have not yet worked their influence into the management of most of our reformatory institutions, because institutional management and control have been reduced to a system, and, unfortunately, this system is more or less vitally a part of the system which lives by political preferment. To secure change means long-continued, painful, thankless struggle. It means not only the education of those whose ideas and ideals must be changed, but also the dislodging of forces whose only considerations are those of sinister financial gain or advantage. This narrative points out concretely the difficulties of the problem, and shows how the methods of machine politics may effectually check or prevent reform, even when well begun.

Surely, the boy who is committed must be re-deemed, but there must be no thought of stopping

until the great social injustices which are responsible for the boy's undoing are removed. The story of the "Bunch of Little Thieves" is a protest against the inefficiency of the public school system which stimulates and tolerates truancy; against the police system with its laws of the jungle; against the system of tolerance and encouragement of an underworld by a callous society, indifferent to the well-being of those of ill favor; and against a great, inert public opinion, right in intellect and feeling, but dormant because of the inconvenience of action and the selfishness of its personal concerns.

The old order must pass away as surely as virtue is eternal and vice is transient. Every appeal such as this, founded upon facts, *must* have its influence. Every response that aids in the more humane treatment of the victims of an undemocratic society will aid in drawing attention to the problem as a whole and will ultimately have its influence in the broader social reform.

Just as Michael Roate's potential humanity was finally reached and surrounded with the conditions for its development, so may other delinquents of similar types be reached and redeemed.

May it be the mission of this *revelation of the true nature of boyhood*, and of the suffering and abuse to which it is subjected by the crimes committed in the name of reform, to awaken a response which will *reform the institutions themselves*, and through them teach the reasonable treatment of boy life to prevent its fall as well as redeem it when it has fallen.

FREDERICK G. BONSER,
Teachers College, Columbia University.

PREFACE

The Army of Little Criminals the world over, and especially in the United States, has increased and is increasing to such an extent that even the most indifferent among us is becoming alarmed. Thousands of children are daily coming to the Children's Courts and are daily being sent to reformatories. Great sums of money are being spent by the State and by private individuals in building and maintaining such institutions.

A great number of reformatory boys are committed to the same institution a number of times and, when old enough, are sent to enlarge the population of our adult prisons.

These facts may not be found in the annual reports of many of our reformatory superintendents, but it is hard to think of a more unreliable source of information. The author of a reformatory superintendent's annual report, whether it is the superintendent himself, or the man who writes it for him, in most cases tells what he knows should be told of a reformatory, and polishes that information up with unreliable figures.

Reformatories, with few exceptions, are merely houses of detention, where a boy who has become unbearable on the street is kept for a period.

Not only is nothing done to reform the bad boy at most of our institutions; but often a boy is committed for a minor offense, meets and becomes a companion of more criminally experienced inmates,

and learns the "in's and out's" of criminality which before his committal were unknown to him. He is sent to an institution where he meets with conditions which are possibly worse, surely no better, than those that have made him what he is; is discharged after a given period, which is alike for all offenders; commits another crime, perhaps a greater one than the first; is committed again; earns a second parole; commits another crime; and is finally sentenced to prison, condemned by society as a born criminal—incurable.

A few months of service, not directed, controlled and flattered investigation, would convince any man, familiar with modern pedagogical ideas and principles, of the utter injustice of such a condemnation.

The apparently imaginary facts, embodied in "A Bunch of Little Thieves" are *real*, come from *actual* experience, and will, I hope, sustain my contentions.

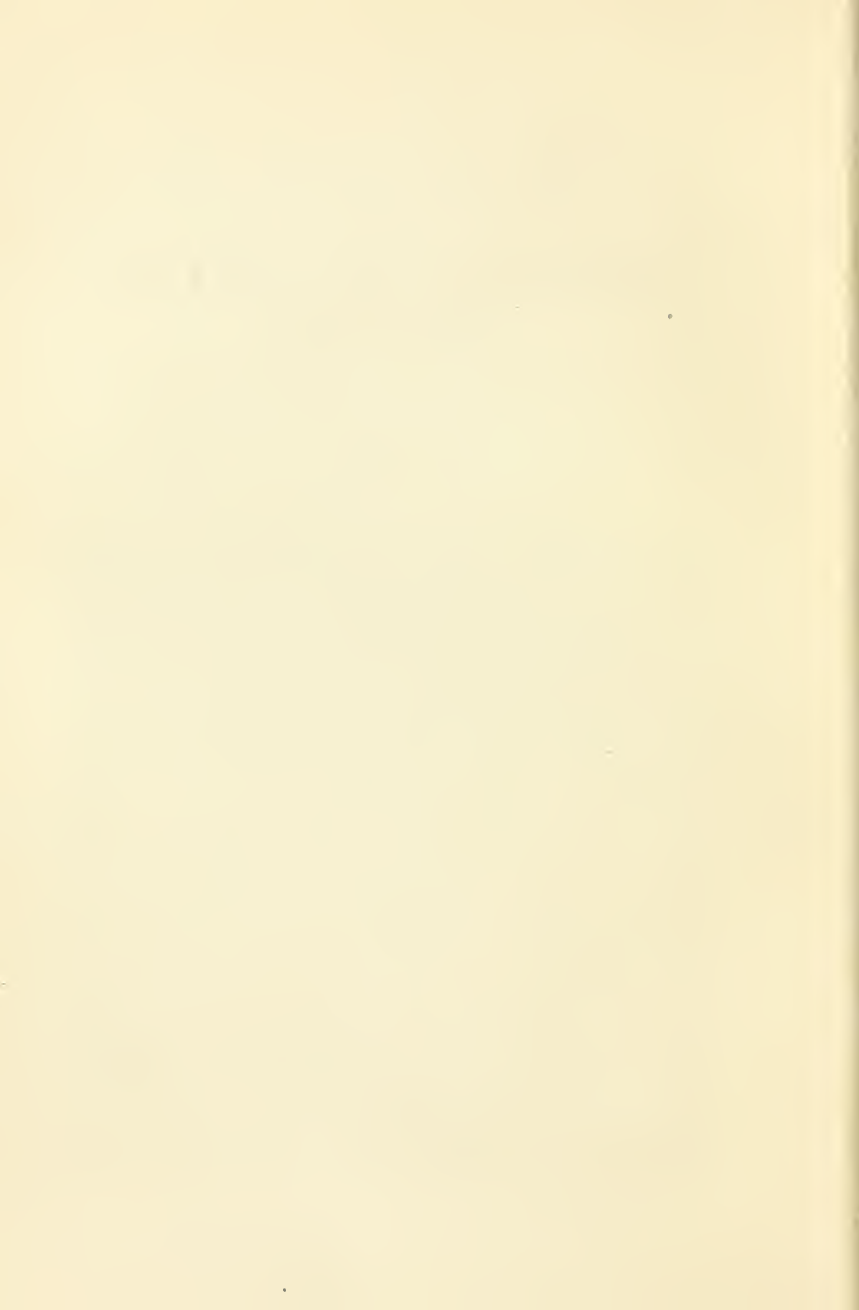
The title is selected as indicating the attitude on the part of most reformatory officials towards the delinquents, who by order of the State become their victims.

D. S. G.

Jamaica, L. I.,
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A BUNCH OF LITTLE THIEVES

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER I

THE CAUSE OF AN APPLE AND A CHILD

It was Michael Roate that the hands of the law had fallen upon; and it might have been number thirty-three or a block of wood, or the falling might have been an accident worthy of a good laugh or of even less importance, as far as most of the people on a squirmy street of the great city slums were concerned. Some, however, were concerned in peculiar ways of their own. There was the crowd of busybodies always on the lookout for whatever may happen, whose sole reason for existence seems to be the constituting of breathless assemblies, whose attraction for each other is governed by the law of imitation, who stops to look for no other reason than that other members of their society are doing so, just as they wear a hat or specially cut cloak or political principle, or ghost of one, because the rest of the membership, led by one or two, are doing so. Aside from these, there were three other parties concerned—an emaciated and dirty individual who had lost an apple, Michael Roate accused of desiring and taking it, and the laws of society impersonated by a rather weighty policeman, who had come to rescue it.

To sum the matter up, an apple had been lost and the machinery of society was forced into motion.

The big policeman had laid a heavy hand on the shoulder of the boy, Michael Roate, and from the grip of that large hand, like the rays of sunset, creases shot out in all upper directions on the ragged coat, and pointed mercilessly to the frightened yellow face. The expression on the officer's face was one of vast importance and power. He waited for the coming of the patrol, the other good-sized officer, and the two excited horses. The pedlar, the loser of the apple, who was encircled by a part of the crowd, went into great antics, explaining it all, shook his fist at the captured Michael, and went off selling his wares in operatic fashion.

The crowd tightened about the center of interest, until repelled in profane language by the officer, when they would shove backwards for a moment or so until the growth of the assembly forced them to the center again. Soon the ringing of the patrol bell caused an opening. Michael was hurriedly thrown into the wagon, and the crowd was left to look about for other excitement.

Michael was dressed raggedly, of course, and his rags were not clean. His hands were covered with warts. The long-drawn face was covered with a clear yellow skin. Everything about him, save his large blue eyes, spelled ugliness and dirt. He was moved on rapidly to the Children's Court.

The Children's Court! What a sordid affair it was for children! Dirty, noisy, sunless, and uncared for! Walls wet and musty, and window panes unwashed—translucent rather than transparent, and

partially hidden by torn and crooked window blinds.

Michael had been there before, and though there was no little of the familiar about the place to him, he was filled with dread—dread for the immense dark hall room, the many parents or guardians dozing in their part of the court room, and the many boys and fewer girls on the other side of the fence and nearer to the black-gowned individual, with the countless other individuals about him—the worst dread of all. But once seated upon one of the benches in the midst of the multitude of little sinners, and one of them, rather than alone, he lost the greater part of his fear and began a conversation with the little man next to him:

“D——n pedlar! I only took an apple an’ he went in on me.”

“D——n pedlars!” came back from his very slightly moved acquaintance, who sat with the air of an old man, rich in experience and certain, as a consequence thereof, that everybody was a d——d something.

“Nothin’ ’ll happen,” said Michael, betraying a small amount of anxiety and a great amount of fear.

“Can’t tell.”

Michael turned half way about. This was unusual. In spite of the amount of fear, it was their habit to encourage each other. This was unusual and might have grown from experience. “What can they do?” he asked with feigned disgust. “Tell you not to do it again and—”

He was interrupted. A sudden shriek of madness rent the thick court room air, and rushing

noises and clatter of feet accompanied it and the more horrible shrieks that followed. In the midst of the dirty section provided for the convenience of the waiting parents or guardians, an uncouth worn-out frame of a woman fell to the floor with a thud and her legs kicked furiously upon its filthy surface.

With arms raised upward, shrieking and condemning all about her, she fell frothing at the mouth, and developed such strength that four huge officers could not control her.

Her continued screaming, the irregular thumping of her feet, grown strangely energetic, continued to fill with dread the dried up little hearts of the huddled mass of culprits on the other side of the fence, all of whom but two had arisen on their toes to see more clearly what they instinctively felt a horror for. The two knew all about it and were ashamed—for they were branded with kinship to the mass of hair and rags that was so horrible.

In the midst of the tumult the gavel came thundering down upon the counter of justice and his honor commanded: "Leave her alone! People in that condition must be let alone! *The Court will go on with its business!*" It did go on and it had a great deal of business.

But it was awful to have that horrible thing about when the Court had so much of importance before it. The four heavy guards grabbed each a leg and an arm, with smiles on their faces, apparently enjoying the joke immensely, and rushed past the horrified throng of parents, out through a mysterious dark doorway, from where they returned some moments later, still enjoying the joke, and

even infecting a few of the boys on trial, for they smiled too.

To Michael this was too mysterious to provoke laughter. Besides there was something in the air now that he had not expected. His thoughts became heavy, and his head was bent forward stolidly.

Several hours later, when most of the boys who had come before him had given up their bench room to the boys that came after him, Michael was frightened by the sound of his own name. He was wanted before the bar of justice, and rose hastily and nervously. He was led around a clutter of desks, and stood right up before the judge, the blood rushing to his face and turning the green yellow to a red. The judge stared at him for a few seconds, and Michael shook from head to foot. The record was wanted of the offender. The clerk from behind touched his hand and asked, "When were you arrested last?"

Michael turned about to answer.

The judge was furious, or at least he feigned fury to teach him respect more emphatically. "How dare you turn your back upon the Court?" he yelled.*

Michael almost fell from his feet, in bewilderment. The District Attorney hurriedly whirled him about.

"Your trial," said the judge when he was given the bad record Michael had already made, "will take place on Wednesday. You see that your moth-

*This is an unexaggerated description of a real court room and a real judge. The writer is aware, however, that some judges are kind and sympathetic and that some court rooms are sunnier.

er is with you or we will send for her with a patrol wagon—do you understand?"

Michael understood and was temporarily discharged, and given over to the probation officer, who made arrangements for his security, and sent him home.

CHAPTER II

HOME AND SCHOOL

Michael was let loose, and the further he got from the Court House the freer he felt, till the thought of home brought upon him by the nearness to it, expelled one fear and substituted another. His home was one of the many that are hidden in the darkness of a brick tenement. With the question uppermost in his mind—"What is going to happen now?"—he entered the hallway. The smell there was bad, but his mistreated sense of smell was weakened and almost dead. Besides there were infinitely worse things to think about just then.

He climbed four unlighted stairways, with the aid of the sticky banister, and made his way along a narrow greasy corridor. In one of the dark corners was his home. He hesitated—straightened his facial expression, and cautiously opened the door. An overpowering whiff of boiled clothes and soap was all he could see or feel for a moment; then gradually he distinguished a dim gaslight, which went through the operations of a sickly dance, because of the opened door and the consequent draught.

His mother was washing clothes. On the oil-cloth covered table, probably unwashed for a week or more, protected from its possible effect by a large piece of paper, lay a bundle of coats, the buttons of which had not yet all been sewed on. This woman, paradoxically fat, with wrinkled brow and perspiration running down the furrows, went on

washing, apparently very miserable about something. Michael eyed her hesitatingly a moment from the doorway; then, feeling safe, and thinking it best to show no signs of worry, made for the door of a dilapidated imitation of an ice box and began rummaging about among the few pieces of foodstuffs saturated with the soapy steam.

This was just what she wanted, to relieve herself. Seeing him at a safe distance from the doorway, with his head in the box, she came down upon him with a heavy wet shirt, from which she had just wrung the surplus water. A button on one end of it struck him on the neck, caused him to scream for mercy and roll over on the floor.

The animal mother's heart was touched. She was sorry at sight of him doubled up on the floor, but did not dare admit her regret.

She went on washing, and through the steam heard the painful wailing of her offspring. She heard it growing more bitter though somewhat softer, and fell into hating herself and her existence; and, as she went on rubbing generously some useless old rag, hot tears were mixed with the dirty water.

Michael cried till he was tired, crept away to his end of the family's sole bedroom, and with his dirty wart-covered hand, wiped off the film of vapor on the window pane that he might see the squirming of the human worms four flights below. He watched them for a long time and, with the movements of the two endless streams, he lost his consciousness and with it his worries. With forehead against the pane, he fell asleep.

When Michael awoke again, the night was approaching. Lights here and there were already lit, and the masses on the street were hurrying their footsteps. He had had a bad dream while he slept, but the thought that his elder brother was coming home from the shop, was even more horrifying.

The yellow-skinned senior soon appeared, and Michael deliberated nervously whether he should jump out of the window or face what he knew from experience was about to come. He judged by his mother's actions that the neighbors had already informed her of what had happened, and that she would at once tell his brother all about it. He had very little time to do his deliberating, however, for no sooner did Mrs. Roate tell Alex what had happened, than he made for Michael and brought him by the collar into the kitchen.

"Now I want to know what happened," he began.

Michael sobbed bitterly and loud by way of answer.

"If you don't take him in hand," cried Mrs. Roate, "and act as a father to him, he will die on the gallows. Every day another arrest. To-day the neighbors were all talking about him. What shall we do with him? I am an honest woman, and my people were all honest. Why should I be cursed with a thief? I have told him so many times its much better never to taste an apple than to steal it." Mrs. Roate could not continue and broke into weeping.

Alex had been told often enough to be a father to him, and if being a father meant the use of his leather belt, Alex had been a most fatherly father,

and with each beating felt his responsibility grow. The fact that after all the beatings he had already administered Michael continued his stealing, was proof enough to the overworked mind of Alex that those beatings had not been hard enough.

At sight of the belt Michael stretched up his hands to protect his face and begged, "Leave me alone."

But the strap came down over face and back in merciless lashes. Michael was forced upon his knees, a position not only physically painful but humiliating to madness, and Michael clawed and bit and struck back, bringing down upon himself such an overpowering volley of additional lashes that he finally fell upon the floor on the verge of fainting. Here the mother interfered, and with her voice at an extremely high pitch, pleading and wailing at the same time, she hung on to the elder's arms, and Michael was rescued.

The beating stopped, and with it Michael's crying. He forced himself up, made for his box near the window, and bit his lips—a sudden power of control was born of a secret plot that Michael conceived and locked somewhere behind the fiery glare of his two blue eyes.

"Go to eat," yelled Alex, still panting.

"I don't want to eat."

"You go to eat, or I'll give you some more."

With that secret plot forming itself more clearly, and burning itself deeper into his brain, Michael went to the table.

The worst of the meat, bread, and soup, in the smallest quantities, fell to the lot of Michael as usual. In the past, when he complained of this, he

was told that when he would go to work and bring home a weekly salary, he, too, would be given more. But he was not complaining that night. He had a problem to solve, and thoughts of it filled him with restlessness; he lay and thought and planned.

The sun never rises in the tenement district. Gray day merely comes, and the tenants awake into it, with a hurry to go to work, a bad taste, and a head full of bad dreams.

Michael hadn't fallen asleep till late in the night, and so was still sleeping soundly when his brother, more cranky than ever, shook him by the shoulder and demanded that he get up at once and clean up for school.

"Why does one get born at all?" he kept asking himself all day, and various impressions of his mother, his brother, and his teacher, in fact of all his world, embittered the stream of his consciousness. He went to school because he had to, and he determined to behave himself if possible, because of his brother and the trial that hovered over him.

"Here is that wretched kid back again," said his young lady teacher to herself, upon sight of him. "I do wish he could be sent away where he belongs."

Michael started to his seat like a good boy; he was too much worried to bother about tricks and meanness. He decided to get to his seat as quickly as he could, pay no attention to any of his classmates, and think, and think hard. But his was not the first good or half-way good intention to be turned to evil. Knowing him for what everybody knew him to be, the boy in the second seat suddenly stretched his leg to trip him. Michael was not to be tampered with, so that instead of tripping as

was expected of him, he kicked the outstretched foot such a terrific blow that the boy fairly howled with pain.

Of course Michael was a bad boy, and everybody, his teacher included, knew without doubt that he was, and consequently and logically, decided that he was the source of the trouble.

"See here," yelled the infuriated teacher, "you good for nothing! Beginning your dirty tricks again?"

To practice injustice does not necessarily mean a lack of appreciation of justice. The fact that Michael was often a wrongdoer did not keep him from feeling most intensely that an injustice had been done him by the teacher, and he forgot his intentions of behaving himself—he was mad. He rushed to his seat and shuffled his feet.

"Come right back here!" cried the teacher, being certain that it would not do to let him go. "*He* to get the best of *me*?" she thought, "No, sir."

Michael came back and shuffled his feet all the more.

"Get into that corner and stay there," she demanded, "and I will attend to you for this some other time."

The frown on Michael's face remained there during the first half hour of his stay in the corner. Then it gradually began to wear off, and Michael slowly moved towards the window, where he could look out upon the busy street below. He remained in that position for some time, and was beginning to tire of the people he was seeing and his own position, when he discovered among the crowds the apple vender, who was the cause of his recent trou-

bles. His excitement was intense. "D——n pedlar," he cried. Half the class were on their feet and rushing for the windows, while the other half were attempting to do so.

"Oh, if some lightning would strike that creature!" thought the school mistress, working herself into a fever trying to get the class back into their seats and to stop the laughter. Then she was to have her revenge. The class was quiet again, and her looks worried some of them, Michael especially. She fell into her seat with a thud and began a hurried scribbling that spelled danger, and Michael felt he was now in for still more.

The note written, a boy took it and left the room with an alarming and prophetic bang of the door, while the enraged young lady rose with the air of one about to have revenge to her heart's content, and proceeded with her work, her eyes flashing fire towards the corner every now and then. "You monster! Just wait!" her expression plainly said.

The monster stood in his corner, very weak and miserable, till the door opened, and a stately individual shoved himself in, arms akimbo, and stared. When he had stared the youngster into half a fit, he motioned with his hand and Michael very meekly followed him out into the office.

"You are a bad one," said Mr. Hale, the principal, after he had seated himself comfortably in his office chair. He laid down his glasses, took up a fifteen-inch wired ruler in his hand, and gently passed it through the other, while Michael eyed it with still more misery written on his face.

Michael's mother was not opposed to corporal punishment and had deliberately given Mr. Hale

permission to beat her son. Mr. Hale, assured that no complaint would be made, asked him to come nearer.

He approached very slowly, attempting to explain in the hope that that would replace the ruler upon the desk where it belonged. "I—only—" The ruler quite suddenly came down with terrible force upon one of his skinny legs, and Michael was upon the floor finishing his sentence with so many piercing "Ohs!"

"I know you," the principal explained to him, "you are a bad one. Get up! Get up! I say!"

Finally getting up and wiping his eyes, till the tears ran in minute streamlets in the cracky surfaces of the warts on his right hand, he was in position for another whack. Down came the ruler again, almost as unexpectedly as before, but not quickly enough, landing on four wart covered fingers that had hurried to the protection of the other fleshless leg.

The howling that followed was forced to subside by threats, and Michael was then shoved into a corner. When his sobbing died down altogether, Michael heard the scribbling of the principal and worried again.

The door opened and the clerk, a pretty faced young lady, who had been waiting without till the performance should end, came tripping into the room with a large blood-red apple on a napkin and a plate.

Michael had been slowly turning about till he could see all that was going on.

The angry face of the principal was now all smiles and good humor. The ruler was placed on

the unfinished note and his delicate white hands began the dissection of the apple.

"Have this," he said to the young lady, pointing to the largest of the halves of the apple, whose creamy whiteness made Michael almost sick with desire.

"No, thank you," said the young lady, sweetly, "it's all for you."

"Oh, you must," and the principal took the soft bare arm, and, lifting it tenderly—there was more flesh on it than on the arms he had just been abusing—forced her to take half of the apple; and the two happily munched away, until he discovered Michael staring wildly. "How did I tell you to stand?"

His wet blue eyes turned about again, and his fevered head fell into the corner, as if that corner had been made for it.

At three o'clock Michael was released, and the principal demanded that he appear in the office early next morning, adding, "I'll make a good boy of you." Michael was well aware of what that meant, and thought, "You only let me go, and I'll be here all right."

When on the street and out of reach, he made a grand rush for the market, where he thought with great care he might gather an apple, a sweet potato, or a cake, from a push cart or stand.

"Hello Kaiky," he cried.

And Kaiky impatiently replied, "Keep still! Come to camp."

"What's the use of goin' to camp when you have nothin' on you?" thought Michael, but something

in the attitude of his friend made him follow and say nothing.

At camp they found Skinny, with pockets dangerously bulging out, packed with sweet potatoes and apples. Camp consisted of a well fenced-in vacant lot, and a huge piece of rusty tin in one corner of it. Under this tin they kept house, to make up for the insufficiency of home.

To the dismay of Skinny and Michael, as soon as they were safely at home, Kaiky began to dance about in a circle on one foot. Little Skinny's nature was very different from that of Michael. Questions were unnecessary in a case like this. Instead of annoying Kaiky with the demand for premature explanations, he joined him and both danced around.

"You crazy dopes," said Michael, "give us somethin' to eat, if you got it."

"You'd be crazy, too, if you had what I have." He gathered the two comrades about him closely and revealed a shining half dollar.

Michael was delighted, and his starving eyes almost looked a hole through it. "Stop your dancin' an' give it to me, and I'll go and get somethin' for it."

Kaiky gave it to him willingly, adding, "Don't spend more'n half of it."

Michael soon returned with bologna, cheese, and black bread, wrapped in a newspaper, the advertisements of which protruded before and after his right arm; but he had spent all of their money.

Such a feast! They ate or rather devoured, the whole supply, and sat down for a few after-dinner thoughts. Kaiky listened to Michael's hard luck

story as attentively as Skinny did, but not with as much interest, for his mind was too much occupied with a something he felt distinctly his own. A new world was opening up to him. He, Kaiky, the boy of occasional pennies, was to become a man with half dollars. And why not dollars? A new world, indeed, was opening up to him now with the birth of this new ability. Like the sculptor, the poet, the composer, or the inventor, he too had discovered in himself a great power, and like them, he was inspired to greater hopes. Here was a something, which he unconsciously felt, that everybody was struggling for, a something the lack of which gave him his rags and yellow face, and so often, this hunger for bologna and bread. To him this new ability brought that something, and might bring it in greater quantities; for not all ladies have only a fifty-cent piece in their pocket-books. There would be plenty of bread and bologna, and even soda-water.

Skinny, who had pocketed two sweet potatoes and an apple, had eaten so much he wasn't feeling just right, and lay stomach down upon a rock, with an air of, "It'll soon be over." He thought of Kaiky's luck, when his stomach allowed him to, and wondered how he'd fare should he try it.

Michael thought very deeply. If instead of all the old apples, he too had taken half dollar pieces, he would now have enough to run away with successfully. It bothered him. He finally worked off some of his emotion by kicking a stone near his foot, and started up.

"Where goin', Mike?" asked Kaiky.

"I got t' go home," answered Mike, hiding his emotions. "I'll be back in a few minutes—just show her that I was in school all day, that's all. Wait, will you, fellows?"

As soon as Michael was gone, Kaiky suspecting Mike of more than going home, asked Skinny to remain at camp, while he, too, was gone for a minute.

"No," pleaded Skinny, "let me go with you."

After some arguing, Kaiky, thinking him very ungrateful considering all the bologna and bread he had so generously distributed, struck him with his fist and left in disgust.

It was just as Kaiky had thought. Mike had not gone home. He was out tryin' his luck. Kaiky saw him too. "But he won't make more'n me," he thought, "I'll go on the other street an' make much more."

Kaiky's home was two blocks north of Michael's, and consisted of but one room more, though, besides his mother and invalid father, it housed seven children. His father was a consumptive tailor, and his mother did most of the supporting of the family. Kaiky was the oldest, and Mrs. Kenen had six small children to attend to after her daily washing of clothes. Kaiky was glad to be out of her reach getting his share of the race's experience on the streets, and Mrs. Kenen was glad to be relieved of his bothering her. You can get neither apples nor sweet potatoes in school. Kaiky attended to his profession until the truant officer collared him and brought him to school, where he made life miserable for his teacher for half a day and kept out of the truant officer's reach for another period.

Skinny was the only child of a poor old couple who lived on the same street. He had had eight brothers and sisters, all of whom died a few weeks after birth. He alone—cursed as he was by heredity and environment—survived as a flickering spark of joy to his prematurely old parents. The father contributed to the sickly family's support by turning their bedroom into a vest shop, and the mother, besides keeping the poverty-stricken home immaculate, knitted stockings and shawls. He was the only one of all their children who lived through his babyhood, and they loved him into waywardness. They were unable to clothe or feed him sufficiently, so they yielded to all his other whims. As far as school was concerned, he had his physical appearance in his favor. He looked sickly. What teacher would refuse to accept an excuse of sickness for his absence?

In the afternoon of the next day, they met again under the rusty tin—at camp. But there was no dancing on one leg then. All Kaiky had was one apple and a small sweet potato; Michael had the excuse that now before the trial he didn't dare to steal; and Skinny had his yellow sickly face and a great desire.

Kaiky roasted his sweet potato to a crisp and divided it into three parts, giving the smallest two to his comrades. The apple he shared in about the same way—a small piece for Mike and a promise of the core to Skinny, who sat and eagerly watched it. That not being enough to satisfy the hunger of growing youngsters, they made for their respective homes with faint hopes of finding more.

Michael knew too well that there was very little to be found in his mother's terrible kitchen, and decided, before he got there, to remain on the street and look out for what might turn up there. Quietly and innocently he wended his way until he fell into a market street. An innumerable lot of men and women yelled like beasts, advertising their wares. Such ugly-looking men and women, disfigured by a strange duty, insatiable desires and misery had constituted Michael's environment since the first day his mind awoke and he could see and think. These therefore made no impressions upon him other than as being the owners of the good things he craved; and for this he hated them.

An old crippled woman was squatted on the curb before him, watching carefully over a heap of bad-looking cakes. "Gee! They look good," thought Michael. He was about to take advantage of her when his large blue eyes caught sight of another woman's pocket-book. A sudden overwhelming desire seized him. She wasn't looking! He gave one pull, and it was all over with him. The furious woman whirled about, grabbed the ill-looking youngster, and hung on, yelling frightfully. A policeman arrived, dispersed a part of the crowd, and with poor Michael disappeared.

CHAPTER III

A TURN IN THE ROAD

The judge was impatient. Sitting in judgment upon case after case of little offenders day after day, is surely not a very good means for developing patience in any one. They were so similar, too—so monotonous. Stealing, forgiveness, and probation, and stealing all over again. Michael's name was erased from the city's directory, with a wave of the hand—"to the reformatory!" The catastrophe he had feared had come upon him, and it was not his fault either. Surely he hadn't had many chances; at any rate he had hoped for many more. "But it's all over now," he thought. "What could a fellow like me do?"

His home was bad. He knew that. But in his dwarfed little mind home stood for the known. Whatever kind of a place the reformatory might be, whether it was true that they beat offenders there three times a day, and once before going to bed, or not, it was the unknown to him. Even with grown-ups, given an equal number of terrors in both the known and the unknown, isn't the ratio of dread one to two?

What a week of horrible anticipation it was, the week he spent in the home of the Gerry Society. Why didn't they send him right there and settle it? One week to ponder over the loss of home, good or bad, and the weight of such an uncertainty as to what the reformatory might be into which a fellow was to be thrown for a very great part of his life,

if not for the rest of it. That week made an old man of him. It was the turn in his road. His limbs, bound by the walls of a room and a guard, gave up, and the little mind alone was left to struggle, to fight it out.

A great change had come upon him by the end of that week—a sort of passage from youth, bad as that was, to old age. There came a queer awakening to feelings he had not been conscious of before; a melancholy expression set in upon his face, and he grew more ugly than ever; his eyes more sad, as if they had wept themselves dry, and the tears that had fallen had left their traces there. His paradoxically fat mother came to see him and cried very much and bitterly, and with this superabundance of tears and emotion, was more like a mother than she had ever been; and her ugly frightened little animal, almost wrecked by fear, felt her new-born tenderness, respected it out of mystery, and regretted leaving it. Old scenes were fading from the screen before him. All the painful hardness, the sharp-cornered table, and the unclean bed, melted into a soft gray past, and the new scenes in the distance became the realities to be feared and baffled.

Michael rode in a train with the probation officer, whose hand, whether off or on his shoulder, he ever felt. Not a word passed between them—one read a newspaper and occasionally laughed to startle the other, who looked and thought.

The train stopped. The probation officer, out of habit, took his hat, descended the car-steps to the almost deserted platform of the little country station of Abolt, and took the crooked path into the

woods and up the hill; while Michael, bound to him, followed.

The quiet little town, a few happy, well-dressed children on its streets, the woods, a little fellow with a dinner pail, whom they met on the footway—these fascinated Michael till he almost forgot his troubles. Such sweet air, such fragrance, such color, and so many trees were unknown to his experience. The woods ended half way down the other side of the hill. From there a valley fell away below, then rose up again to form another hill, on top of which he beheld a cluster of brick buildings with two rows of very beautiful concrete cottages spreading away to the right and left.

Eager to see all of it, and yet afraid of the consequences, he followed the officer down into the valley and up the hill again. Another strip of woods withheld the reformatory grounds from their view, but when this was passed and they found themselves on the miniature plateau which belonged to the reformatory, Michael was overwhelmed by the sight. His experience had encompassed nothing more than dirty streets and tenements and a small park or two. From the center of a circular plot of grass there rose up into the air a flag-pole. Near it stood a small boy in canvas clothes holding a bugle under his right arm. Just as Michael came fully upon the grounds, the boy placed the bugle to his lips and blew a dozen strong and happy notes, which gaily shot into the air like a skyrocket and broke into the metallic stars, and echoed from hill to hill, filling his little soul with wonder and hope.

Neat, clean roadways, with curved pebbled surfaces, lined with whitewashed stones, ran from cot-

tage to cottage, and met in the center of the grounds, circulating about the flag-pole and leading to the school and administration building.

The wonderfully colored hills, the fragrance everywhere, the beautiful cottages, the homes of the little sinners, the robust bugle boy, and the general spirit on the place, produced hopes in Michael that he had never dreamt of—his hands might be washed, his dirty clothes made clean, and the fear and uncertainty of living might leave him—he smelled such lovely things from the kitchen.

Over the door of the school and administration building, carved on an oblong-shaped stone slab, were the words, "*Abolt School.*" He was glad to notice the absence of the word reformatory of which he was afraid.

He was taken into the first room of the office, and stood up against the wall to await further orders and demands. The probation officer then passed within. The room in which Michael had been left standing was occupied by a number of desks, on one of which he could see a typewriter used by a queer-looking young lady, who sat half way upon it; and, on a very high stool near a second desk built into a partition, he could see an even queerer looking young man, bent over a day-book, and dangling his legs. These individuals might have been part of the furniture, so little interest did they evince in either the new boy or the probation officer—this was a way they had of showing their dignity. Extremely different as these two were in general, they were very much alike—especially in being queer, and Michael eyed them with many kinds of interest.

The door suddenly opened and the little bugle boy, carrying his bugle under his right arm, entered the room. He put his bugle into a drawer near the bookkeeper's feet and was about to turn away, when the queer-looking official turning about a silly-looking face, abnormally long ears, and an equally long mouth; stuck his pen into a tuft of light brown hair between one of the long ears and his head; and, without saying a word, grabbed the bugle boy by his coat sleeve with one hand, and with the other pointed to a piece of paper that had fallen from his august hand. The boy quickly picked up the piece of paper, handed it to him, and being released walked to the typewriter's desk.

The typewriter lady wore a collar that seemed to choke her, a belt that was almost cutting her figure in two, very stiff cuffs, and tight shoes with high heels. Her hair was slightly gray, and her face, beginning to wrinkle, sparkled with dignity. She rose, gave the bugle boy her seat at the typewriter, and took a chair at another desk nearer to Michael.

"Well," began the queer-looking typewriter lady, after Michael had begun to fear that he was to stand in that position for the rest of his life, and with a twist of her half gray head upwards and a religious glance downwards, she added, "come here."

Michael surmised that he was wanted.

"Your name?"

Michael thought a moment, then hastily replied, "Mike Roate."

"Mike? Michael you mean. Your father's name?"

"I ain't got no father."

"Ain't got no father!" she repeated. "What English expression!" Then, as Michael began to pass his hat nervously from hand to hand, she began again, "What's your mother's name?"

This time he was stuck for sure, but a sudden thought dawned upon him. "Mrs. Roate."

"Missus! Hasn't she got more of a name than that?"

A number of feminine names came to his mind and he hurriedly made use of the first, "Mrs. Mary Roate."

Several other questions, such as, "Where do you live?" "How old are you?" "How many times arrested?" "What for?" and so forth, followed. When through with these he was returned to the wall.

"Jacque," said Miss Trunch, the typewriter lady, to the bugle boy, "take this boy to quarantine."

The two boys left the office. Jack ran down the stairway and through the corridors so nimbly that poor Michael had a hard time following him. A few small clouds had come up on the sky from the east, and a wind had arisen to make the woods (on the other side of the reformatory hill) moan and bend. They were now in a court yard, and he could see the woods, the valley, and another hill beyond that, and the cottage or hospital he was going to, a few rods off. It was set apart from all the other cottages, was surrounded by flower beds, and was made of a very rough-looking concrete.

"That's where you're goin' to," said Jack.

"What's that?"

"Hospital."

"Hospital?"

"Yes, where they cut you up."

"Gwan—no!"

"Sure. Don't believe it then."

Michael drew back. "Quit your kiddin', is that honest—where they beat you?"

"Beat you!" then, lowering his voice, "they beat you all over here."

Michael trembled. "Do they beat you hard?"

"What's the use of bein' afraid, you cheeser!"

They came upon the dreaded cottage. Jack, with the air of a man born to his trade, rang the bell twice, called out, "One for quarantine," and with remarkable friskiness, slapped everything within reach and disappeared. Another boy took charge of "One for quarantine," and took him inside.

The smell of chemicals was not pleasant, but the sight of the nurse, dressed in white, bubbling over with authority and conceit, was infinitely worse.

"Don't you know enough to salute your superiors?" he demanded, with an English accent, glancing at him severely with small piggish eyes.

Michael didn't know enough, and what was worse, he was one of those unfortunate creatures who, in spite of their lowly positions in life, dare by a peculiar expression on the face to resent ill treatment or what they consider such. Michael, full of fear, involuntarily frowned.

With a rough jerk this way and that, he was taught how to salute, but now he was certain he hated this fellow, and the frown grew more dark—unfortunately for him.

"Wait 'ere a moment," said Mr. Sarving with a twinkle of one eye, "I think you need a trimming up."

He soon came back with a forty ounce bottle labeled, "Loafer's Mixture," and pouring out a good sized dose in a glass, handed it to Michael saying, with graceful irony, "'Ave a little to the good luck of your new home."

Michael accepted the glass with unsteady hands and attempted to do as he was being forced to, but as the glass neared his nostrils, the horrible smell almost knocked him over. He pulled his head backward and began to cry, probably more because of his anger than weakness.

"'Ere, sir, you drink every bit of that down, or I'll rake the skin right off of you."*

He grabbed the glass tighter, and with maddened effort, dashed the contents down his throat. Oh, how his stomach revolted at the stuff—he felt very bad—dreadfully bad. Before he had time to get to the pail he had noticed in the corner, all that his stomach contained shot from his mouth upon the floor in a horrible stream.

"See 'ere," said Mr. Sarving, a little frightened, but hiding his fears with a stamp of his foot, "you take this pail and this mop and you clean up every bit of that—not a speck is to be left."

"'Ay there, Billy," he began again, addressing himself to the hospital boy, when Michael showed signs of recovery, "cut the 'air off this kid," then, turning to Michael, "when he gets through with you, when 'e gets all your 'air off, go to that basin and with plenty of soap and water wash your 'ead till you've killed all the animals in it."

*A number of people are ready to testify at any time to the existence of such a chemical combination and to its having been used for such purposes.

There were six boys in quarantine, and they ate their dinner on their laps on the floor of a side room. The dinners consisted of some meat, abnormally brown gravy and two sandwiches of black bread and ruby red jelly, served on tin plates; and sitting on that floor with the pewter plate on his lap, Michael for one, thought that meal good.

Through with their repast, Mr. Sarving ordered a general cleaning up. To let a new boy go with the minimum of instruction was against his pedagogical principles. "'Ere, 'ere," kept coming in and out. "Come back, sir; take this cloth again, sir,—this isn't what we call clean, out 'ere, sir."

Michael was engaged in polishing up Mr. Sarving's bass horn in a room on the second floor, when the bell rang startlingly. Manuel, the hospital boy, gradually acquiring the characteristics of his superior, having noticed through the window that the bell had been rung by two boys and not by an important official or visitor, took his time in closing the novel the nurse had loaned him, stretched as far as his arms would reach, and step by step made his way to the door. He opened it to admit a large boy hanging on to a blood-covered smaller one. Mr. Sarving, when informed, took his time in appearing, while the little fellow, his face petrified into a terrified frown, hung on with both hands to his head, on the other side of which could have been seen a deep gash surrounded by blood-soaked hair.

"What'd you do, 'ay? You'll be frisky, Moses, will you?"

"I fell," muttered Moses.

"Fell, 'ay! None of that lying to me. With whom did you fight? 'Ay Moses?"

"Colonel Reilly struck him upon the head with a stick," the larger boy explained.

"You 'old your mouth, sir Benedict, and talk when you're talked to."

The story having been brought to a climax, Mr. Sarving proceeded to wash the wound, and shaved off the hair about it, while Moses rent the air with his cries. Mr. Sarving then went into another room and soon came back with a few semi-circular needles and gut thread. At sight of these Moses turned pale and began to stagger. Mr. Sarving shot half a glassful of water into his face and down his neck. Moses braced up but continued crying.

"Stop that noise," yelled Mr. Sarving, "or I'll run these needles through you." And he did.

One, two, three, four stitches. Moses bellowed frightfully, and Michael, upstairs, heard every bit of it. Michael shivered, tears came into his eyes and he determined to escape. "This is their cutting up—they'll do it to me, too." He looked about.

That entire night his little brain sweated through the horrors that lurk about and fill each dark corner of a blood-smeared slaughter-house, and only when a faint gray light dawned in the east was his sweating interrupted by the sweet sounds of the bugle boy.

For two weeks he was shut up in the gloom of that hospital, and only his having learned that that was not where he was to remain forever kept him from becoming desperate. At last his time for being discharged from quarantine, came, and he had the pleasure of beholding the woods and the beautiful colors of early autumn; and a great desire possessed him to be free and to run to the golden embrace of

the nature he knew little of, but instinctively trusted.

The place seemed quite different to him now from what it did when he had first seen it. His mind was too occupied then with what might happen. From conversations he had had with his fellows, he learned a number of things about the place and, though some of them were not very pleasant to look forward to, it was now more of the known and less of the unknown to him; and standing as he did on the main roadway of the Abolt School grounds, there was an expression of resignation in his face. He saw that the reformatory was built on a long hill in the form of a plateau, that towards the east and west it sloped down into a valley, and each valley climbed up again and formed another hill, the western one, the more beautiful of the two. It was more beautiful to him, too, for it lay in the direction whence he came, and the sun went down beyond it. From the woods of its summit rose the towers of a monastery, and he wondered what they were.

He was taken to the last of the longest row of cottages. It was to be his home for a while, and he liked it.

CHAPTER IV

COTTAGE ONE, NUMBER THIRTY-THREE

Cottage one was the New Comers' cottage, and locker number thirty-three was for Michael's belongings. Mr. and Mrs. Bloate were the cottage parents.

"Michael," said Mrs. Bloate, "thirty-three is to be your number—here is your locker. Come with me. I will give you your clothes. After supper I will show you how to sew your number on every piece and how to patch up the holes. You are to keep these clothes and see that no holes get into them. You will have to keep yourself clean if you want to get along here. This is to be the cleanest cottage on the line. Don't forget that, as soon as you see a hole in any of your stockings, you must mend it."

"Yes ma'm," said Michael, with a sigh of relief, and vowed in his heart that he would always do just what Mrs. Bloate wanted him to do.

Papa Bloate came home from the laundry, where he had been on duty, and inquired, "Where's the new boy?"

"What's your name?" when Michael was brought.

"Michael."

"I'm glad it's not Mikey," muttered Mr. Bloate. "William," turning towards the stairway and calling for his cadet, "take this fellow downstairs, drill him in marching and tell him general rules. See that he understands you and that he does what you tell him to."

Number thirty-three, like one, ten, or twenty, was taken downstairs by the all-important William, and impressed with his all-importance, which impression was supported by a push, a pull, a jerk, or a slang expression. "Keep your ears open," though he could not have listened more attentively. "Step lively," or "Get a move on you," though his nervousness was shoving him much ahead of time. "Now do what I tell you to, do you hear?" though not a thing he did had any possible chance of looking as though he had the slightest intention of not doing so.

The first supper bugle blew. The thirty-one boys lined up like little prisoners, one almost on top of the other, and to the haughty orders of William, marked time, bending knees into knees. One fellow was out of step, another had his cap on his right shoulder when the order was for the left. William stole up cat-like and administered to each a humiliating and painful kick. There were others treated in the same manner, but not one showed a sign of rebellion, save perhaps by their burning cheeks; but there was no one there to read that as a sign of rebellion or rebellious feelings.

Into this inhuman line destiny had worked him, and he took his place as number thirty-three. They marched down into the basement and washed. They marched up again and marking time, waited for a second bugle, when they marched again to the flag-pole in the center, one boy almost upon the other, and a cadet at the side of each cottage group, singing out in a commanding monotony, "Hip, hip, hip, hip," for the rest of the distance.

Near the flag-pole stood a tall, stout individual, dressed in a blue uniform with brass buttons and epaulettes, and wearing white gloves. There was a significant severity written all over his flabby face, and every boy knew what it meant. As each cottage group approached him the order was given: "Left hand, salute!" and every left hand went up instantly.

When each cottage group was in its place, a square was formed about the flag-pole. Colonel Reilly, with the air of a real general, stepped to one side, and in his military voice called out: "Battalion! At-ten-shun! Cottage one, report!"

William stepped out of his line, and with the military fashion exemplified by the colonel, reported, "Thirty-one present! Blickfield on the farm, Moses in the hospital."

"Cottage two, report!"

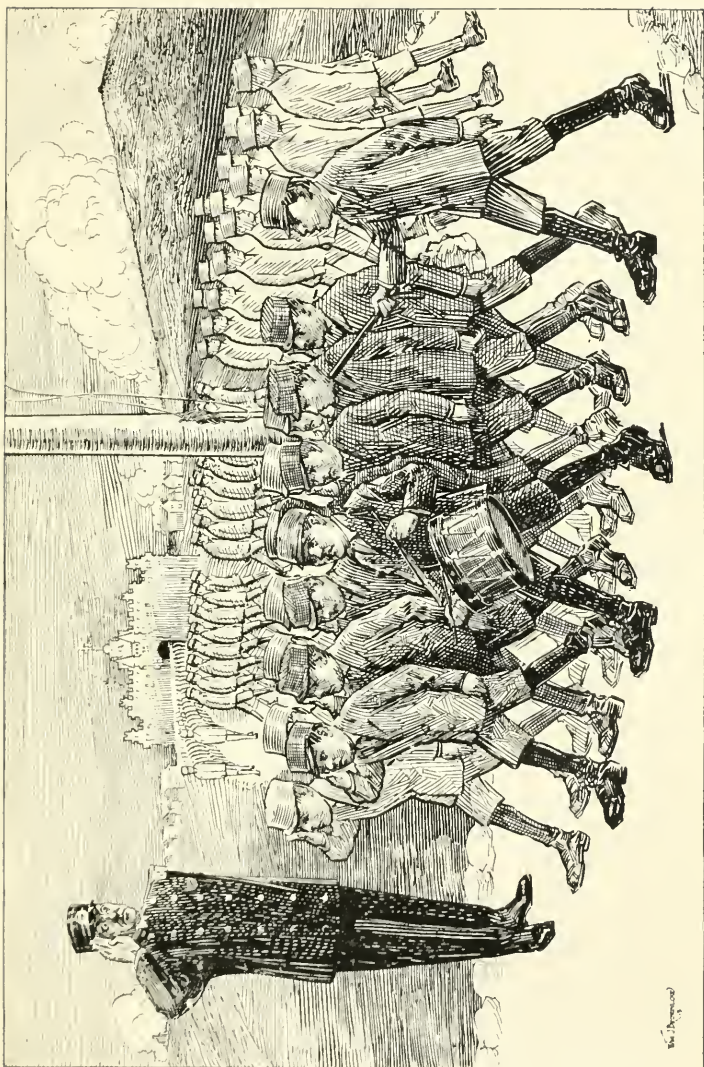
"Twenty-nine present. Schaefer in the coop, Marlberg in the dining-room."

Cottage after cottage was ordered to report and each time Michael heard the word coop, he wondered. Serving room, farm, or kitchen he could well make out, but "coop" worried him. Besides an almost audible feeling passed from boy to boy along the lines every time the word was mentioned.

Two boys loosened the ropes on the flag-pole, and the Colonel ordered "Caps off!"

Then the bugle began to blow. Michael stood facing the monastery on the western hill. He knew very little about western evening skies, but circumstances now allowed nature to teach him about it, and he began to feel.

The flag was lowered.



"Caps—on!"

"Battalion—to the right—march!"

To the measured rhythm of the drum beat, filling the air with noise, and the fearful commanding "hip, hip, hip," three hundred pairs of little feet ground the pebbles on the walk, leading to the dining-room.

The Colonel stood, a statue of Hercules, at the head of the few cement steps leading to the ivy-covered dining room and, as the boyshipped by, he was saluted.

The dining-room was extremely long, and consisted of two rows of alcoves, each alcove containing a long table surrounded by thirty or more chairs, to seat all the boys of a single cottage.

Every one entered and remained standing back of his own chair. The Colonel held a small bell, which he rang when the room was silent. A small boy came out upon the center of the floor and hurried through a formal prayer. The bell rang again, and three hundred chairs were pulled out and made use of. A sound like that of Niagara poured out of the alcoves into the center of the room. Plates clashed upon plates, and knives and forks upon knives and forks and on the floor. What stories were told! What discussions held forth! Each wrinkled brow held something that had to be given out, and all talked at the same time.

A short half hour passed by; the Niagara of sound was hushed by another touch of the little bell. Every boy was on his feet—cap on shoulder.

Another boy stepped out upon the center of the floor and rushed through a short formal grace, the same that had been used for an endless number of

days before. The Colonel detailed different boys to different duties, and the rest in military order marched out, on their way to their respective cottages.

The moment the playground back of each cottage was reached, the lines were broken, and each youngster let loose in his own way. Some ran, some jumped, some threw stones, some merely stretched and rolled over on the ground, some stood on their heads, while a few sat down to read books carried in their blouses. Michael ran around a bit, just to get rid of the cramped feeling, then sat down near William, whom he respected and disliked at the same time, to look out over the valley, upon the hill, the monastery, the soft floating clouds, and the red sky. William sat with a long stick in his hands. He watched the boys and beat the ground with his stick.

"Got all your clothes?" asked William.

"Just what I got on," said Michael.

"You got to get more. You'll get them to-morrow, I guess."

There was something warm and friendly in William's attitude, although he did look away as he talked, and had a kind of habitual frown upon his face; and Michael, his heart filling with gratitude, felt himself invited to talk.

"You here long?" he wanted to know.

"More than my time, but they won't let me go, because they can make use of me. If they don't let me go soon I'll run away—don't snitch on me now."

"Cross my heart—never," said Michael, full of emotion, "I'd like to run away myself."

"Don't, it's better not to. They only catch you

anyway—an' it's worse. You got to take your lick-in' an' go to the coop for two weeks. The best thing," shaking his head, "you do as they tell you to, try hard, live through the two years and get away as quick as you can. Take my advice, don't try to get any jobs—if you make good they never let you go. I do more than a cottage father here. Why should they let me go? But I'm going to go anyway—I'll make them let me go."

"Is Bloate good to you?" asked Michael.

"Naw—he's good to me because I help him a lot—but the fellows hate him. I wish I was out of here. Wait till you're here a little, and old man Bloate comes in from his day off, drunk. Take my advice, do what he tells you, if it's to eat dirt—you'll be better off."

It grew dark. The monastery and the woods became one, and the red in the sky grew into a grayish blue. William announced it was time to turn in, and every one of them filed into the basement which was now all lit up.

"I told you to sew your initials on all your clothes, didn't I?" said Mrs. Bloate to Michael, as soon as she saw him.

Michael was about to say that he thought she meant when they all went in, but he thought it safer to take what's coming and say nothing, so he merely hung his head.

"I'm afraid you're one of those lazy fellows," went on Mrs. Bloate. "You'd better get over that quick, or it'll go hard with you here."

He followed her meekly into the sewing room, and sewed away as hard and fast as he could, making poor looking initials and figures on every piece

of clothes that was to belong to him. "If I don't dare to answer you that I am not lazy, I will show it to you," thought he to himself.

"It's almost time to go to bed," said Mrs. Bloate when he was through. "Go down to the basement where the rest of the boys are."

Down stairs he found many of them noisily jumping about, playing, fighting, and telling stories, but no sooner had he gotten down there than the order was given to "fall in." Every boy fell into line immediately and, upon a second command, bent down to unlace his shoes and take them off. Another military command, and there, with caps and shoes in hand, they stood with stockinged feet upon the cement floor, saying their prayers in regular, monotonous, suppressed voices—thirty-two of them. Their prayers said, they marched into the other room of the basement, where they washed, marched up stairs to their lockers to put their clothes away, and filed into the dormitories each to his own little bed.

By this time the grounds were deserted, not one pair of little feet was upon the gravel walks. Every one of the dozen dormitories was aglow with light, and their windows were like great eyes in the night. Then one by one the eyelids drooped, the lights went out; and, just as the clock in the school hallway sounded the first beat of eight, one little fellow made his way to the lonely flag-pole, touched the bugle to his lips, sent a sweet welcome to the stars and a melancholy "good night" to more than three hundred of his comrades. When the last note of taps died away in the fragrant stillness out-doors, Michael pulled the blanket up to his neck, placed his

right cheek upon his right hand and went to sleep. Outdoors the long gray roadways led from cottage to cottage, unused, and the white stones along their sides looked up to the sky and drew down what little light was left there.

CHAPTER V

UNOILED MACHINERY

Another morning dawned. Such mornings come to intensify the desire to live. A perfect sky with immaculately white cloudlets here and there to prevent a trace of monotony. No mists about to mystify. The woods, the hills, every feature of the great panorama intensely sharp and clear. The colors pouring out over the universe with a sublime strength, and the air, invigorating and hypnotic in its fragrance, found every free man and every free creature bubbling over with optimism and the desire to do. Every sound that rang through the valley—the playful cry of children, the barking of dogs, and the farmer's call to his son across the summer fallowed fields, were rounded out in the atmosphere till they poured out like the notes of a symphony. The bugle blew in the morning upon Abolt School, and never before were children more delighted with getting up and going out. Even the few who had spent the night on a hard board floor with iron cuffs on their bony little hands, crawled up to the barred windows and pressed their little faces hard against them, drank in their tiny part of the atmosphere, and sent out their message of gladness to melt in the open space of the universe—they shouted through those bars, though they did not exactly know why.

The usual commands resulted in their being washed, combed and on line; and the usual "hip, hip, hip," took them one close upon the other to the

flag-pole, where, towards the sky, and seemingly above the golden vistas extending in every direction, they sent the flag to wave. The flag up, they were turned about towards the dining room, from where odors of coffee came to invite them, and, soon they were "hipped" in for their breakfast.

After breakfast they were marched back to the playground back of the school building, and were sent to their class lines, where they were to wait for the school bell. Michael was sent into the office.

"Jacque!" called out Miss Trunch, the queer-looking stenographer, with her eyes heavenward, and her collar still choking her, "take this boy to Miss Britter and tell her he is ready for school."

"What's Miss Britter?" asked Michael softly, in the hallway.

"Principal."

Michael stood himself up as straight as he could in Miss Britter's very narrow office, to wait with several others until she should return.

"Are you a second striper, Bill?" asked Jack of one of the boys standing there.

"Yes."

"All right, watch this fellow, will you? I have to go back to the office."

Michael was hurt. "Why should I be watched?" he asked himself.

But Bill paid little attention to him, and he forgot the insult and, in his own way, and for his own private reasons, examined everything there his eyes could reach. There really was not a thing there to be afraid of. No whipping machines—not even a strap. The only ruler there looked very innocent and unused to anything but measuring. There

were papers, books, maps, a vase with flowers in it, a statuette, and no stick save the window pole.

Miss Britter entered. A young woman of thirty, tall and extremely neat and graceful. A stern face, yet the kind that adults as well as children instinctively trust. She was the sort of a woman that can make children do just as she wants them to without losing the slightest amount of their love—who can talk quietly and without excitement in exciting times, and who can, when she deems it necessary, act the part of a little friend and play-mate with remarkable interest and sincerity.

She led a dark chubby little fellow of five by the hand. His large gray eyes recognized all the boys standing there, and his roughened baby lips smiled to them, and not one there, with the possible exception of the new boy, but would have gladly grabbed the little fellow and run about the hall with him upon his shoulder, just as they all did in the basement playground or on the playground out of doors. Miss Britter pulled out a box of clay blocks from the lowest drawer in her desk and asked him to build a "house" or a "bridge," then sat down in her chair and began to write.

One boy after another was respectfully attended to and dismissed. Michael and Billy were left.

"Ready for school, are you?" she asked Michael, reading his name from a list she held before her.

"Yes, ma'm."

"Good. What grade were you in, Michael, when you were in the city?"

"I was in the six B," said Michael, then adding with a tone of regret, "but I don't know much. I stayed away too much,"

"Well, we'll work hard here, and you can make up. You look like a very bright boy. I think you will be one of my all 'A' boys. I'm going to send you to Miss Brand's class. As soon as you show me that you can do the work I will send you higher."

"William, take Michael to your class room and give this note to Miss Brand. Then come back and we'll talk things over."

William left with Michael following him, and having done all that was asked of him, returned to Miss Britter's office, where he found her writing.

"Now, William, what has happened to you so early in the morning?" she asked, looking up at him.

William looked over at Tony playing with his blocks.

"That's right," she said again, "before we begin to talk things over, take Tony back to his class room. Now, listen, Tony," turning to him, "you may take these blocks with you to your class room and play with them there; but you musn't talk out loud—that bothers your teacher and the rest of the boys. Do you think you can play with them quietly?"

"Y-y-yes, ma'm," said Tony, "I'll make a b-b-big house."

"Good, and when you finish it, draw a picture of it for me, and I'll hang it up right over my desk—here."

Tony's ambition was aroused to such an extent that he fairly flew across the hall to get to his room to begin. William saw that he reached home and returned.

"Now, William, tell me what has happened."

"She won't have me in the room, that's all. She

said so. I came into the room, didn't do a single thing, and she got mad at me as soon as she saw me, and said I should go out to see you."

"You mean Miss Brand?"

William saw his mistake, "Yes, ma'm."

"Do you mean to tell me that you walked into the room, didn't do a single thing and that for that Miss Brand sent you out?"

"Yes, ma'm. I'd tell you the truth if it wasn't so. I always told you the truth."

"Yes, that is so, but don't you think that something about the way in which you walked in might have been disrespectful to Miss Brand?"

"No, ma'm, I never meant it that way. I am not looking for more reports. I want to go home as soon as I can—my mother needs me."

"I'll tell you what I will do. You take this note to Miss Brand and be very careful about the way in which you walk into her room, do the very best you can, and after school I will ask Miss Brand to come down here and you can explain before her. We will see what the trouble has been and try to settle it quietly together."

Miss Britter had been busily at work upon the revision of the curriculum, about half an hour after William had left her alone in the office, when she was startled by the gruff voice of the Colonel saying, "Hospital list," sticking his white gloved hand in at the door holding the hospital list, and apparently interested in something going on at the other end of the hall.

Miss Britter rose to take the list from him, and as he started off, called out, "Just a minute, Mr. Reilly."

She returned to her seat at the desk and he stuck his angry face in at the doorway. "Well?"

"Will you tell me, please, why Moses is still in the hospital?"

"That's none of my affairs, Mr. Sarving's got the run of that."

"What is the matter with him?"

"I can't tell you that either—I don't know."

"Well now, Colonel, Moses has got to come back, or I'll know why he is there. It's about time that this keeping of boys out of school for mysterious reasons is stopped."

"You know whom to see about that."

"Where is Brown?"

"Brown is in the coop."

"What has he done?"

"Struck back at a superior."

"And Lane?"

"The same."

"Where is Schaefer?"

"Run away. He's now serving in the coop. Two weeks."

The Colonel impatiently left, and Miss Britter went back at her work, but didn't work very long. She grabbed a sheet of paper and began putting down a whole list of grievances, then got up and made for the superintendent's office.

She came into the room where Michael had stood against the wall the first few hours after his arrival.

"Mr. Lapin, please tell Superintendent Krammer I would like to see him for a few minutes."

Mr. Lapin, the queer-looking bookkeeper, raised his golden head, the ears of which, at obtuse angles, shot away from his crop of hair, with a grin that

made still longer his abnormally long mouth, smiled and said slowly and sweetly, "Mr. Krammer is busy."

"How do you know?"

"The Colonel just went in."

Miss Britter left the office and returned half an hour later. "Tell Mr. Krammer I would like to see him," she said again.

"If he isn't busy," with the grin repeated.

Miss Britter looked at him a moment with disgust. "Please be kind enough to attend to your business, and tell Mr. Krammer that I wish to see him."

Mr. Lapin then announced Miss Britter, and Mr. Krammer asked her to come in.

Mr. Krammer, well fed and bearded, bearded for a purpose, sat in his lordly seat before a large desk at one end of his spacious private offices, the walls of which were hung with pictures of the reformatory buildings, and in the center of which stood a long library table, surrounded by chairs.

"Good morning, Miss Britter," said Mr. Krammer, pleasantly. Mr. Krammer's facial expression always betrayed the control of two forces—bitter feelings lurking out of fiery eyeballs, and a reddish face that usually contorted itself into diplomatic good humor. Often the first would dominate. Then his face would turn pale, and his breath come quick and a long continued throat clearing performance would follow.

Miss Britter calmly took one of the chairs about the library table, brought it near to his desk, and sat down. Mr. Krammer leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands.

"Mr. Krammer," she began, "I wish to speak to you about many things."

"Yes."

"First, my ninth grade is in need of classics."

"More books!"

"Yes, Mr. Krammer, we must have them."

Mr. Krammer began to clear his throat. "We have spent too much on books already. Since you came here, Miss Britter, we have spent altogether too much on books—too much entirely."

"There were no books here when I came—we had to buy very many, of course; and we haven't enough yet."

"There were enough to my notion. When I was a boy and went to one of those rickety old school houses," Mr. Krammer's fiery eyes softened down and he smiled sweetly, "the teacher was the only possessor of text books. Every lesson was written on the blackboard and we copied it."

"Then you believe we ought to go back to rickety old buildings?"

"No, not at all! That's not my idea, Miss Britter. I am a great believer in being thankful for what one's got. No, Miss Britter, you mean well, but you know, you are giving them too much education. What they need to know is how to work and to work willingly and obey their superiors. Most of them will do much better as carpenters and shoemakers than college graduates. You must admit that."

"Mr. Krammer, you boasted of having a high school class in your last annual report, didn't you?"

"For some of the boys we might have one, if it doesn't interfere with more important things."

"But we are not classifying the boys just now, nor are we considering any complaints against it. We *have* a high school class—what sort of a thing is it going to be?"

"They have all the other books they need, can't the classic be put on the board?"

"Evangeline on the board? Surely you don't want to pay your teachers for writing Evangeline on the board—it would take a month."

"What will Evangeline cost? How many do you need?"

"We need thirty copies."

"Can't we buy fifteen and make two of them use one?"

"It makes it very hard. Besides they have the chance of laying all the blame of misuse on the other fellow. I think it would be more economical to buy thirty copies."

"Well, send in your requisition to Mr. Lapin."

"Now, Mr. Krammer, this brings me to another matter."

"Yes!"

"I'm afraid that it's impossible for Mr. Kurt to do anything with that High School class. He has no discipline at all and knows nothing about teaching, which is really the cause of the latter."

"What these boys need is a little handling by a bigger power. You won't admit that. I think I'll send Colonel Reilly in and have him attend to them."

"But it is not the boys' fault, it is the fault of the man. Why punish them? He is absolutely unfit. Besides, Mr. Krammer, I thought we agreed that Mr. Reilly is to have nothing to do with the school. You admitted to me the other day that he is an ignor-

ant army officer. I cannot and will not share the responsibility of this school with an ignorant army officer."

"Well, I thought in a case like this, where the boys are rebellious, a man like the Colonel would be of service to you."

"But I insist it is not the boys' fault. It's Mr. Kurt who needs to be attended to. The other day I came into the class room and found him arguing with a boy near his desk on baseball championship, while the rest of the class were piled up in a corner, reading a newspaper. Suppose one of the Board of Directors should suddenly step in?"

The last sentence was the most convincing of all, and touching a weak spot in the superintendent's policies. Mr. Krammer stroked his pointed beard and glanced sidewise. "Would you have me suspend him at once?"

"You might just as well for all the good his remaining here will do; but we must have another teacher soon."

"All right," making a note of it, "I will fire him today, and when in the city to-morrow I will look up a few teachers' agencies."

Miss Britter looked down the list of things to talk about which she had brought with her. "Oh, yes," she began, "has Mr. Sarving the right to keep any boy he wishes and as long as he pleases at that mysterious hospital of his?"

Mr. Krammer turned pale, and began to cough.

"Boys are kept out of school continually," she went on, "and the only excuse I get is that they are in the hospital."

"No boy is sent to the hospital unless he has to go there."

"I know that boys go there mysteriously and stay there mysteriously, and then come and complain to me. The man knows nothing about medicine, claiming nothing more than the certificate as an orderly in a Turkish bath house, and he doses those boys with awful mixtures. He is a secluded sort of a fellow and is never seen outside of the hospital."

"Miss Britter, this whole affair is not in your province."

"I don't see why not, Mr. Krammer, when boys coming back from Mr. Sarving's den, who have never had anything but respect for me and for the teachers, are suddenly found uncontrollable and insulting, and, what is worse, filthy minded. Isn't that in my province?"

"You should tell me this, that's right. I will attend to it. I will look into the matter closely." Mr. Krammer took his handy little pad and began to write. "Thank you for telling me. I will investigate."

Miss Britter left the office. When she reached the hallway she found it was eleven-thirty, and time for noon dismissal bells. A few minutes later the hallways were filled with boys on their way out.

She straightened everything on her desk, took her wraps, locked her office door and stood in the hallway waiting.

A class-room door opened and a young man of about twenty-two was concluding the admonishing of his class for misbehavior; then, finally satisfied with the line they made, sent them out. When the last boy had disappeared down the stairway, he

came back with an expression of relief and smilingly said, "Lost in thought?"

"Yes. Don't you want to go for a little walk, Mr. Rolan?"

"Sure."

Miss Britter was in a hurry, and Mr. Rolan simply followed her, so that before long they were quite a distance beyond the farmhouse, and were turning down a hidden road that branched off to the left.

"We musn't go too far, or we'll miss our tough old meat."

"Well you like that kind of fare," said Miss Britter, glad to get into that trend of discussion.

"I like it?"

"Evidently."

"How do you make that out?"

"You don't complain. You stand for it all."

"Why do you stand for it?"

"Because I am a woman, and alone in my fight. Besides, I am preparing not to stand for it. Of course, there are worse things to fight against here. We can go away to-night and get a good meal; but there are evil influences brought to bear upon these children, which, to some extent at least, will produce evil effects that will not be as easily eradicated, and some of them perhaps will never be remedied."

"Well, you have realized the difficulty of changing matters, and are waiting for an opportunity. How do you know but that I, too, have been figuring things out in that way? It is useless to get up and howl. I am not a giant in any one direction, I admit, and therefore wait upon others. You are; go ahead; I'll stand by what is right in my opinion. I have seen the wrongs here at least, almost as clearly

as you have. But I repeat, that I have said and done nothing because I don't believe I can do anything but get into trouble, or make matters worse if I try. I have seen things done here that have made my blood boil, but what could I do?"

"Mr. Rolan, you are an intelligent young man. I don't know how far I may tell you what I think. I must say though, since you have forced it upon me in that way, that you have not resented those things you speak of, and you have blandly smiled along."

"I think it's unfair for you to speak that way."

"Do I speak truthfully when I say that I have seen you sit by at the table and smile when a wretched cottage father told of some very clever, brutal, unfair trick that he played upon some youngster, unable to protect himself?"

"I know what you have reference to, and I can see where you are half right. I should not have encouraged Mr. Gallwin by laughing; on the other hand, I am only human. You must admit that Mr. Gallwin is witty—what he said struck me as funny. I did not look as deeply into the matter as you did. Still further, Miss Britter, what am I to do? If I don't laugh with those fellows, they will immediately consider me an enemy, and do everything they can against me, and not a thing of importance will be gained."

"You don't know anybody that would come out here and make a good High School teacher, do you?"

"I know somebody that would make an excellent teacher, oh, I believe the very best man that you could find anywhere for this place, and he, if you please, would not stand by and laugh—he'd make things move if he got in here."

"Who is it, and why so many 'ifs'?"

"He's the kind of a fellow that never cared whether it was an instructor, a student, or a professor that was wrong—when he thought him wrong he got up and told him so."

"But who, who is he, and where found?"

"He has a good position, and is earning probably three times as much as he could earn here."

"Who is he?"

"He is a college friend of mine, who is teaching in one of the city high schools. His name is Edward Liton."

"Do you think it would be impossible to get him to come out here?"

"I hardly think it probable, since it would mean such a loss in money; but you can't tell at all with him. He is the kind of a fellow that, if he were interested in the work, would not consider the money end of it."

"Suppose you write to him at once and ask him to come to visit the school. Say that it's very important that he come out this Sunday."

They came upon a richly laden apple tree, and Mr. Rolan, with the help of stones and half bad apples, brought down a dozen good ones.

A sound of laughter startled them. Turning about, they saw Nida Cane, one of the teachers, in back of them, chewing away at an apple and apparently enjoying the situation.

"Where did you come from?"

"I have been back of you since you started."

"Why didn't you speak up?"

"I didn't want to intrude; but never mind, I enjoyed myself. Shall we go back?"

"Do you care to?" asked Miss Britter.

"I don't," replied Nida, "I'd much rather feed on apples than on bad meat."

"So would I," said Rolan. "To-night we can go to Hilldale and have a good big dinner."

"I wish you had spoken up, Nida," said Miss Britter impatiently, "now we have to tell everything all over again."

"What's happened?"

"Oh, just listen. Mr. Rolan is going to get a splendid fellow, a real High School teacher, to come out here and teach the High School class for us."

"What are you going to do with Kurt?" asked Nida.

"I have asked Krammer to discharge him, and he promised to do so today."

"Poor Mr. Kurt."

"I felt that way myself—it just upset me; but after all, it isn't a question of accommodating Mr. Kurt with a position. The boys are at stake, and no one else must be considered. He knows that he is absolutely unfit for the classroom; he ought to get out of his own accord, but he isn't man enough to do that."

"That's true."

"Liton is a very capable fellow," began Mr. Rolan. "You just watch, if he comes here. The moment that fellow arrives he will have a dozen different propositions for the improvement of everything he will see. And they will be propositions you will be glad to consider. He won't throw them on you, you know, but you will see at once that he is interested and that what he proposes will really be very helpful."

"Great! That's just the kind of a fellow we need here. The place is splendidly equipped but there is no spirit—nothing to really interest the boys."

"I guess we'd better make for home."

"What will they do with the three pieces of nine-cent meat?" asked Nida.

"Give it to the boys."

"Not at all," said Rolan, "they'll come back to us tomorrow."

"That's right," Miss Cane assured them. "I have handled the expense accounts long enough to know that nine-cent meat is given to the staff, while the boys grow fat on six-cent meat."

"What kind of meat does Krammer get?"

"Twenty cents a pound, if you please, for their meat, and there are orders that the two different kinds, that is Krammer's and the other two are not to touch each other. I wasn't his confidential stenographer for two years for nothing. That's why he asked me to become a teacher, he hoped that in a few years I'd forget some of the things he wishes I didn't know."

CHAPTER VI

HIS FIRST LESSON IN REFORMATION

The change of diet, the subtraction of self activity and excitement from Michael's life on the street, enervated him so that, with the possible exception of cool clear mornings, he was always tired. The boys fell in on cottage lines after leaving their class rooms, one day, and were taken charge of by the cottage cadets and cottage fathers, who marched them back to their cottages to wash up and prepare for their noon hour meal.

"Get in there and wash," yelled Mr. Bloate to two of them who loitered a moment to finish a short conversation which they had begun as new friends. One of them was Michael. The other fellow knew Mr. Bloate quite well, and immediately ran into the other room to do as he was told. Michael did not know him at that time, and having always resented humiliating orders, though not intending to show open rebellion, was not so quick as Father Bloate had expected him to be.

This delay, whatever the cause of it might have been, was insulting to Mr. Bloate's authority. To tolerate that might weaken his ability to discipline! He dashed towards Michael and with full force struck him upon the mouth.

Michael raved. The pain was great enough, but how unfair the whole thing was. His anger reached the uncontrollable point; with tears rushing down his cheeks, blood on his lips, he turned about upon his assailant and cried out as loud as he could, so

that every boy stopped in the process of washing himself and with mingled wonder and admiration gazed at him, "What did *I* do?"

If Father Bloate had not been afraid of this demon boy, he would have jumped upon him and beaten him unmercifully, but he really was afraid and thought of a better way. "Is that so, Mr. Roate," he began slowly and emphatically, shaking his head, "is that the kind of a fellow you are? We'll break that in you, you just wait."

Michael's anger subsided and he was almost overcome with dread. Shivering like a leaf, he washed himself, and fell into line with the rest of the boys, who were waiting for the cottage ahead of them to start for the dining room.

Things quieted down a little. Mr. Bloate was busy. Michael sighed with relief to see him occupied. "It's all over now," he hoped, "I'll take care next time."

But his friend knew more about Mr. Bloate and was not so optimistic—he worried. "Why don't you keep still?" he whispered to him, bending slightly out of position to do so.

Mr. Bloate, who happened to see him, looked at William, and William hurried noiselessly behind that friend and kicked him as he would have called it, "good and hard."

The boy's face turned red, but he never moved. Mr. Bloate was satisfied that he was a *right-minded* boy; he took his punishment like a man. But that other fellow!

In this state of mind, when the order was given, they went to the dining-room, to eat what they could get there.

The Colonel was there as ever, on the cement steps. Mr. Bloate left his boys in charge of William when they reached the dining-room, and walked up to the Colonel, who bent his severe head a trifle that the cottage father might tell his story. Michael did not notice this, but his friend did. Taking the advantage of the noise of many feet, he whispered once more, "Don't talk back."

Mr. Reilly said "h'm" when the cottage father was through, and turned his fiery orbs on Cottage One and the innocent looking Michael.

The boys saluted the Colonel and were passing in. Just as Michael reached the step upon which the Colonel stood, the latter sent out his heavy, white gloved hand, grabbed him by the shoulder, yanked him out of the line, and stood him up against the wall.

When all the boys had entered and taken their places at the tables, the Colonel again grabbed Michael by the shoulder, dragged him into the center of the dining-room, where all the boys could see him, and commanded, "Sit down!"

That was terrible. To sit on the floor, before all the boys, and teachers and cottage parents! In the hope that he might save himself the humiliation, Michael pleaded, "Why?"

"Never mind why. Sit, I said."

"I won't never do it again," Michael continued, the tears rolling down his cheeks.

The Colonel picked him up by both shoulders, swung out his legs, bent them under him, and forced him to sit down.

Michael lost his reason. The situation was un-

endurable, and his suffering broke out in the form of a yell, "Leave me alone!"

Age and rank had not made it impossible for the Colonel to lose control of himself. Never had a boy dared to breathe against his will. This fellow was surely a demon; controlled by the same insanity that forced Michael's unfortunate yell, he grabbed the youngster, and took him out into the vestibule where a hard wood flag-pole stood against the corner. With that stick the Colonel beat the rebellious and shrieking Michael till the blood oozed out of his stockings, covered his face, and stained the floor. There was no telling how this would have ended had not the Colonel's wife interfered. Michael's shrieks brought terror into the dining-room, where some murmured and some cried; among these being some of the teachers and cottage mothers, while no one ate much that day.

The Colonel's wife rushed to the boy's defense. She threw her arms about the madman and struggled with all her strength to keep the stick back. "I'll kill the bloody devil," he cried, and the shrieking of the culprit died down into groans. Michael was taken to the hospital, unconscious.*

That evening when Michael, attracted by the sound of the drum sending the boys away from their supper table, dragged his swollen legs to the little window of his "coop" and peeped out, he could see the burning sun lower itself behind the hill and the monastery. If only he could escape, fly away to the hill, and live in the lonely woods like an animal!

*Affidavits can be produced showing that far from being an exaggeration this is a mild description of an incident that has actually taken place. See newspaper articles in appendix.

He cursed and swore, thought of his bare, dark cell and the nights he would have to spend there alone, and fell to crying.

The pain increased with his moving about. The bandages were too tight for swelling feet. His first lesson in reformation had gone far. When he crawled back to the hard board on which he was to sleep, and sank into a heap upon it, he growled like a wounded cub.

Footsteps approached. A key was thrust into the keyhole. Who was coming now? What further torture? He feigned sleep, digging his wet face into his two arms.

The intruder had come with food. Michael could smell the coffee. He felt a gentle touch on his arm. He shut his eyes tighter. He was touched again, but he only growled as if in painful sleep. The man had a heart. He set the coffee and bread down upon a board made for the purpose, and quietly left, turning the key again.

Taps wailed through the moonlit valley that evening. Deep into the night, while cottage father Bloate slept soundly, the boys in the dormitories of Cottage One could hear a faint melancholy groaning from the cell above them, and long after the lights of the institution had been turned off, a weak candle light could have been seen in the teacher's room of the adjacent cottage, sending meek radiance through a long drawn window blind, upon which nervous shadows played to and fro and disappeared.

CHAPTER VII

VISITORS

It was two o'clock the following Sunday afternoon when the Visitor's Train, as it was called, drew in and stopped at the little country station of Abolt. Miss Britter, Miss Cane, and Mr. Rolan waited anxiously for the sight of Mr. Liton among the throng that lowered itself down the car steps upon the unfrequented platform. Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, and sometimes friends of bad boys, of every possible shape and size, carrying equally variant packages, that maternal, paternal, or filial love had packed full and high, poured through the doors of the station and began hurriedly to ascend the hill.

"There he is!"

A tall young man, light-complexioned face, well-defined features, wearing a light gray suit and carrying a tan-colored raincoat folded over his left arm, approached Mr. Rolan with his right hand extended.

They exchanged very warm greetings and Mr. Liton was introduced to the two young ladies, whose enthusiastic welcome greatly pleased him.

They started at once for the reformatory carrying on a lively fire of questions and answers as they went. They reached a point from where they could see the road fall away into the valley and climb up the other hill. The entire length of it was dotted with hurrying relatives struggling up with their queer and numerous packages.

Mr. Liton stopped frequently, to look about and to comment upon the scenery or express his desire to live in such a place. "It's great," he would say. "So many things could be done here."

"I should think it would be easy to influence boys in a place like this," he said at one time.

"In what way, for instance?"

"Well, I don't mean by giving sentimental talks on the beauty of nature, nor even botanical operations on leaves and plants. I mean by taking walks, taking pictures—athletics, camping, and so forth."

Miss Britter laughed. "Yes, that would be great, but—we need the people who think as you do. Most of our friends here, do not think it necessary to influence the boys in that way. These boys are to do the world's dirty work."

Mr. Liton looked at her a moment, then appreciating her sarcasm, said dryly, "Those people are out of the question; they have no business to be here."

"Suppose you can't get others, for one," said Miss Cane, "and suppose those who are here interfere, for two."

They arrived upon the grounds and Mr. Liton was taken through some of the class rooms, cottages, offices, auditorium, and finally to the library, where they sat down to talk matters over. By this time, Mr. Liton was bubbling over with queries and ideas, and it kept all three busy answering them. The library was a very large room surrounded by book shelves and ornamented in the center by a huge pool table. One large gilt framed picture hung most inartistically upon the wall.

"I'd like to give you a lift, Rolan," said Mr. Liton, "and shift this thing," pointing to the pool table, "out into the back yard and substitute for it a lot of chairs and library tables. This would make an excellent study room. Have you study periods?"

"No, we have not been able to have study periods. You see most of the boys have to work half a day, and have only two and a half hours of school each day."

"That's not right."

"There are many things in this world that are not right."

"Come to my cottage and see my room," said Rolan.

A few minutes walk brought them to Cottage Four and Mr. Rolan led the way up the stairway.

"I thought all the teachers' rooms were on the ground floor?"

"Oh, no, you are given a large room below, when you arrive, and after you're here long enough to show what kind of an individual you are, unless you are strong enough to demand what belongs to you, you are suddenly ordered to move into the small rooms above," said Nida. "I know the whole process. Is there anything else you wish to know?"

Mr. Liton smiled, "I am interested to know just how long I should remain in the large room if I came to work here."

"Come and try it," put in Miss Britter quickly.

"Perhaps I will."

Mr. Rolan's room was a little bit of a thing. Besides the bed, it had room for no more than a small desk, a wardrobe, and one chair. They didn't stay long. On their way down Mr. Liton expressed his

desire to go into the little sitting room of this cottage.

"They are alike in all the cottages," said Mr. Rolan, "but come in to see it, they are kept differently."

"Do you use these fireplaces in the winter?" asked Mr. Liton after they entered.

"We are supposed to," said Miss Britter, "but I have never seen any of them in use."

"What an influence it would be to have the boys sit about here on winter nights—read or tell stories to them—roast chestnuts."

They left the cottage and started for the grove back of the school building, where visitors sat in groups surrounding this or that boy they had come to visit. From some groups came sounds of gladness—a brother telling tales of the outside world, or a liberal father promising great rewards for good conduct; while over others the sky was dark. A widowed mother in need of her son—reports for misconduct—further detention. Many faces were saddened by an inexpressible something. One father merely sat near his son and looked away, while the son buried his head in his hands. The time of departure was drawing near. A stout mother, who had to start earlier to get to the station in time, put her arms about her boy and wept, and he wept with her.

Mr. Liton was grieved at the sight. He stood where he could look over the entire grove, and had he been given to weeping as an expression of grief, he, too, would have wept. Mr. Rolan stood near him, accustomed to the sight, while Miss Britter and Miss Cane were busy in the crowd talking to parents and

relatives, telling them how good this or that boy had been since they had made their last visit, buying unconsciously the eternal gratitude of the bad boys who stood by and smiled.

Seeing the two young men alone, Miss Brand approached them.

"Miss Brand, meet Mr. Liton," said Rolan unenthusiastically.

"I am very glad to meet you," said Miss Brand smiling profusely and moving all kinds of muscles most gracefully. "Are you to become one of us?"

Mr. Liton looked at her and the leave-taking host. There was a gayety in her remarks that grated upon his feelings at the moment. Many mothers were weeping then, and some of the boys with them. One mother, feeling it very hard to part with her little fellow, put her arms about him and kept them there, weeping all the time until she was forced to leave.

Mr. Liton watched the boys and their parents. Miss Brand went on talking. "This is a lovely place, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's very nice."

One of the big boys strolled past them.

"Hello, Henny," said Miss Brand, "How are you this visiting day?"

"Fine and dandy," said tough-looking Henny, with a wink and a smile.

"You're a great fellow, you are," she went on.

"Yeh? I know it."

"Wait till I tell you why," Miss Brand went off to one side with him.*

*A report in the New York Call of Dec. 31, 1911, indicates conditions much worse than here hinted at.

"Who is this woman?" asked Liton, when she was gone.

"One of our teachers, if you please."

"She doesn't please me much."

The bell rang. All visitors must go. There was more crying, hurried kissing, and painful leave-taking. A moment it seemed, and the chairs had been taken up, the boys marched to the cottages, and the grove was deserted.

"Let's go for a walk and show Mr. Liton our farm," suggested Nida.

"What do you think about the place?" asked Miss Britter when on their way past the farm house and down the road to their left.

"I am tempted to apply for a position."

"Good! We'll help you get it—you're needed here."

"Really, is there a vacancy?"

"Yes, and one that no one could fill so well as you."

"What about your other position?" asked Rolan.

"I don't care for the position and they don't need me so very much either. I'm tired of the slavery of it—I want to be where I can accomplish something."

"Small salary here, though."

"What is it?"

"Forty-five a month."

"Is that all?"

"Well, you get your board and room."

Mr. Liton thought a while. "That's quite a jump down for me, but never mind, I'll manage."

"Good, good! You are really in earnest?"

"I certainly am."

"Well, you leave it to me, then," said Miss Britter. "I will see that you get your appointment."

They remained down the valley a long time. An old deserted house stood there, with all its window panes shattered, like a human skull with black holes where bright eyes had been. In front of this house and in harmony with it, lay the lifeless remains of an old apple tree. Upon this they sat looking from hill to hill, planning, discussing, and planning again, until the afternoon was gone; the contrast between woods and sky was accentuated, and all details lost—until the universe was lit up by stars and fireflies, and the air vibrated with the songs of peepers and their fellow singers.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAMILY INCREASES

Michael lay in his cell, night and day, for two weeks. When all his wounds were healed and he was strong again, after spending so many hours of misery with his face pressed against the hard wooden bars on his window, watching the other boys at play, he was released. He was taken into the office and privately examined as to his physical and mental conditions.

"Well, how do you feel now?" asked Mr. Krammer.

Michael had been standing squarely on both feet. This greeting was sudden and he had no answer for it, so he shifted his weight to the right foot, clasped both hands behind him, dropped his head, and stared out of the window.

"It doesn't pay to be disobedient."

Michael did not answer, but two tears grew out and spread shining films over his eyes.

"Do you think it does?"

"I wasn't disobedient."

"Do you want more of what you got last week?" asked Mr. Krammer, keeping back his anger with an effort.

"No, sir," was his answer, but it was said in a way which showed that he had become hardened to such experiences and didn't care.

"Well then, don't talk like that. Do you think you can now go out and obey your superiors, as you always should?"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Michael, subdued, and though Mr. Krammer realized that that answer meant nothing, he felt himself conqueror and quite relieved. The awful stubbornness had been broken, if no other result was accomplished.

"Everything done here is done for your own good. Look what a nice clean bed you get—of course while you do the right thing. What a lovely home you have—what beautiful trees around the place. You must be appreciative. Appreciation is one of the greatest virtues."

Michael continued looking out of the window, swinging his weight from one foot to the other, every now and then.

"Now we are going to make a good boy of you Michael, a credit to your parents and of value to your employers, or to any one with whom you may be connected."

Michael still made no answer.

"Yes, sir, we will make a good boy of you at no matter what cost and pain," went on Mr. Krammer. "If you behave yourself, stand ready at all times to do, without any nonsensical back talk, all that is asked of you by your superiors, you will have a good chance here. You can learn a trade or farming. You can be a house painter or a plumber, or whatever you like to be best, and become a useful citizen, useful to your parents, your employer, or your country. I often get requests for good boys to fill good positions. If you do what is right in the cottage, at your work, or wherever you may be put, I can place you in a good position. I placed one boy on a farm the other day."

Michael became interested.

"A little while ago one of our boys got a good position with one of the big plumbers of the city. Then, besides all that, I may want to adopt a good boy. There are all kinds of good chances for the boy who obeys, who works with a will and doesn't watch the clock—who always smiles and is happy and respectful."

Mr. Krammer was now satisfied that there were no broken bones in the boy's body and that he was not inclined to tell his troubles and have the thing leak out. "He won't run away. He is a quiet secretive boy, anyway," thought he, relieving himself, "he never tells anything—he bites his lips."

Michael was taken to the principal's office.

"You have lost a great deal of your work, haven't you?" said Miss Britter, when Michael was left alone with her.

Michael's eyes watered again, and he made no reply.

"I don't like to send him to Miss Brand now," thought Miss Britter. "She won't put up with his condition and there'll be more trouble."

"Would you like to stay here, in my office, and have me help you, so that you can make up the work you lost?"

"I don't care," said Michael bitterly.

"All right, then, we'll do that for a while. I think that if you work hard with me, I will be able to send you to a higher grade."

Michael was overwhelmed by the encouragement and her genuine interest, especially coming after his interview with the Superintendent and his own unfriendly reply to Miss Britter's friendly offer. "How

different she was from all the rest, from everybody in the world."

She brought a chair from one of the rooms, placed it against the table, asked him to sit down, and gave him an entirely new set of books, paper, pencil, pen and ink. These clean new things were to be his, this his room, his desk, and the principal his teacher.

"I wonder why she's so good to me," he thought. "I guess she's sorry for me."

"Before we go to work, Michael, will you take this note to Miss Cane's room for me?"

Michael did not know what to make of it. How can a teacher bestow more kindness upon a pupil than by sending him on an errand. He was full of hope, and showed his eagerness and delight in having, as he concluded in his little mind, the best lady he had ever had for a friend.

"Yes, ma'm," he said very eagerly.

He pulled a clean piece of paper out of the waste paper basket and folded it about the note that he might not stain it, and thought to himself, "Tomorrow I'll come in here with my hands so clean, I won't need a piece of paper, if she should send me with a note again."

Hardly had he run the length of the hallway when he felt himself colliding with a big body—he was face to face with the Colonel.

"Where are you going?"

"Miss Britter sent me with this note."

"Oh, no sir, you can't be sent anywhere, you go right back with me."

"Miss Britter," the Colonel shouted when they

reached the door of her office, "what's this boy doing alone in the hallway? Did you send him?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"He's not a second-stripe boy."

"Mr. Reilly, I sent this boy on an errand. Will you please let him go?"

Mr. Reilly released his hold and stood looking at her, trying to control his temper. "You have no right to send that boy anywhere."

"Talking about rights, Mr. Reilly, wasn't it decided some time ago that you had no right to interfere with my work? I am in charge of this school."

"You don't know this boy as I do."

"I think I know him much better than you do, if you will pardon me."

"Well, y'don't know him. That fellow'll die on the gallows, and you'll help him get there."

"What's the use of arguing, Mr. Reilly, we won't agree. Besides I don't believe in prophets."

"Well, I'm going to see to it just the same. I suppose I ought to send out an alarm for him anyway. He'll never come back, and if he don't you'll pay that five-dollar fine let me tell you."

"Giving a boy a chance and making the possibility of leading him the right way is worth the risk of a five-dollar bill to me."

Mr. Reilly made a dash for the superintendent's office.

Michael came back, took his seat and worked with an expression of satisfaction which he had never had before. "The big burly Colonel had to give in," Michael chuckled to himself. She was

certainly, beyond all doubt a friend of his and a powerful lady.

Miss Britter moved her chair near to Michael and began to test his ability to read. He held a new sixth reader in his hand and was looking for an interesting lesson, since he was given the privilege of choosing one. Mr. Krammer appeared in the doorway and frightened him. "He won't let her teach me," was the first thought that came to him.

"May I see you a moment?" said Mr. Krammer, remaining outside of the doorway, with the usual pale face and flashing eyes—he was angry.

Miss Britter walked out into the hallway.

"Now, Miss Britter," he began, growing paler, "you know that it is against the rules of this institution to let a new boy, any boy that hasn't yet received his second stripe, go anywhere, alone."

"I know that very well, and, never before, have I sent a new boy anywhere. This, however, was an exceptional case and I felt that I could gain so much by doing it that it paid me to risk it—he's here, as you see."

"It makes no difference what the purpose is, Miss Britter, these are my rules and I'd like to have you observe them. He did come back this time, but he might not next time. You haven't had the experience I have had. Don't forget that I have been in this business twenty years and I know. Besides, this fellow's got, as you probably know, a very bad disposition. I wouldn't trust him for a minute. Why isn't he in his class room?"

"Because I wish to help him make up some of the work he has lost by being shut up in his cell."

"I don't think that a very good plan. He can make up his work in his class room."

"Mr. Krammer, this is as far as I can go. If you wish my office—you may have it—you are interfering with everything I do. I am not a machine and my ambition does not run in that direction. I can find a place where I can have a little leeway in doing things, at least to a limited extent."

"I'm sure you have a great deal of leeway here, Miss Britter. I merely want to help you out. You are busy enough with your duties as principal. Why should you be adding burdens to those you have already? However, if you enjoy doing this I have no intention at all of interfering with your work. I hope I haven't made you feel that. I think you have taken too much hard work and responsibility upon yourself."

Mr. Krammer finally walked away and Miss Britter returned to her private pupil, determined to show that he was not going towards the gallows.

"What have you decided you'd like to read, Michael?"

Michael held the book open and pointed to the title on the page before him, "The Wreck."

"Good, I love that myself. It is only one chapter from a very beautiful book."

"Yes, ma'm, I know—I just read here, it is from David Copperfield by Charles Dickens."

"Did you ever read David Copperfield?"

"No."

"Well, then, shall I tell you the story, so that you will enjoy this chapter more?"

Michael answered, showing that he was pleased with the idea, and took a comfortable position for

listening and one in which he wouldn't have to look into her eyes all the time, for as much as he liked her now, there was still that feeling of doubt in him towards everybody which is created by the experiences of a life like his.

"This is the time to act," thought Miss Britter, as she observed the subtle change in the expression on his face. She summed up all the power within her. With a vividness that is prompted by the greatest appreciation only, she led the misused David through all his trials, pictured vividly his sufferings at the hands of his misusers, the happy days on the seashore with Emily, his travels, the horrible wine-shop, his escape, his aunt, the storm, the banging of the shutters on the window of his bedroom in the hotel at Yarmouth, Ham and the wreckage, Emily's going to Australia, David's rise to greatness, and all that she could remember, till Michael's eyes fairly bulged, and he hoped in his heart that he, too, would be like David Copperfield.

Michael entered right into the spirit of the story, especially because Miss Britter told him that it was a true story, that Dickens himself is supposed to have experienced the things that he made David experience in the story—that it was a real true story. As far as his own experience allowed him, Michael actually saw everything she described, or he read, and he read with feeling. There was none of the singsong that he used to read with, and that most children read with; and when he got through with the lesson, he asked with no little anxiety, "Have you that book?"

"Yes, I think I have it," said Miss Britter, "Come up into the library and I will let you look for it.

There is a very nice Morris chair up there and when you find David Copperfield, you can sit down in it and read till I come for you."

She left him in the library and, much to her regret, felt obliged to turn the key on him. She then returned to her office, where to her consternation she found a crowd of youngsters waiting for her. Miss Greet had sent down three impudent boys, and they were all three giggling fearlessly. Miss Tick sent in one fellow who refused to work. Mr. Rolan sent in two who were caught fighting, and Miss Brand sent in two for impudence and disrespectful back talk. All had to be attended to.

"If they wouldn't send down so many of them," thought Miss Britter, "I could do something with them."

She took the smallest fellow first.

"What's the matter with you?"

"I didn't do my work," said Peter, his head lowered and his fingers twitching nervously.

"Why *didn't* you do your work?"

"'Cause she won't promote me. I did better'n Ring; an' he *was* promoted."

"Now, then, because you won't do your work we won't promote you, and if you don't do your work from now on, we simply won't let you eat until you do. Go back to your class room and tell your teacher that you are going to do your work now, and then when I am through with the rest of the boys here, I will come to see what you have done."

"You two boys who were caught fighting I will send back to your class rooms now, and this afternoon or to-morrow morning I will call you in here and tell you what I think about it. I am going to

let you think it over by yourselves until then, so that you will feel that I am fair in what I am going to do with you, and be able to tell me why I shouldn't do what I want to. Something must be done with boys who fight. If you can't settle things quietly by yourselves, then we have to step in and help you settle them. Go on now back to your class rooms and by to-morrow, if not sooner, I will see you both."

"Now you three come over here. Impudence!" she looked at them a while. They stopped laughing.

"We were only laughing," said one of them, and thereupon all three lost control of themselves and giggled again.

"If you acted as you do now I don't blame Miss Greet for getting rid of you; but tell me what the trouble was."

"Marlberg had his pockets stuffed with sandwiches—he got up to go to the board—teacher called on him—they fell on the floor." And once more the three of them were forced to muster all self control to keep back their renewed desire to laugh.

Poor Miss Britter! She was on the verge of laughing heartily herself. What was she to do? "Think of a teacher sending boys out for such a thing, causing a great deal of trouble, and placing herself and principal in a peculiar position instead of merely laughing at it herself for a few moments and going on with her work," she thought to herself, and tried to look serious.

"Where's Marlberg?"

"He's in the class room. We tried to tell her, she called us impudent."

"Well, you annoyed her. If you thought it was funny you should have laughed quietly to yourselves and not, as you must have, disturbed the rest of the class and the work. Now go back and behave yourselves. I don't want to give you any reports for this because I don't think you meant anything wrong, but take care now, or I shall have to."

Miss Britter was left with the two who had been impudent to Miss Brand and had given her disrespectful back talk. Having been witness to the manner in which she had attended to those who came before them, as was unavoidable, since her entire offices consisted of one small room, they were now quite hopeful or careless as to their own fates. A third boy was with them, and he carried a note. Miss Britter began to read it, and as she did so her face assumed a very severe expression. She looked at the bigger one.

"She nags me so," he said with contempt, "I had to say it to her. I don't want to be in her class and I'll never be good while I'm there—she just won't let me, she hates me."

The other fellow kept changing his position and swinging his head from side to side.

"I'll tell you, Jack," she began, leaning downward a little and half shutting one eye, "if I didn't know you for an exceptionally nice boy, I should be very angry at you for talking like that either to Miss Brand or to me."

"I can't help it, it's true," said Jack, almost crying.

"You may think it's true, but whether it is true or not Miss Brand is your teacher, and her work consists of trying to help you be better men by teach-

ing you; and you should under no circumstances have talked to her in that way. You know what the rules of this institution are. For your offence, I must give you fifteen marks each. That means that you must spend three weeks more here. Now, I would advise you, as a very good friend of yours, to take your punishments like men and go back to your class rooms and forget all about it. Only don't get into that mess again. Everybody has the right to think as he pleases, but no one has the right to talk as you boys did."

Both boys cried. No punishment could equal in severity the punishment of reports, for every report lengthened the slavery they despised.

She gave the third boy a note to take back to Miss Brand, and sent all back to their class room; then went up stairs to get Michael down before the bugle should blow.

Michael sat squeezed into the Morris chair, his feet under him, reading.

"How do you like David Copperfield?"

Michael shook his flushed face. "It's the nicest story I ever read. The first part was a little hard for me. But now!" he shook his head again, and went on, "I want to hurry up and get to the part where David Coperfield plays with Emily by the sea. I found some other books, while looking for this one, that I want to read when I am through with this."

She promised to let him read every day, and they started for the floor below, and Michael was about to be sent down with the rest of the boys, when he recognized the probation officer coming in with two boys back of him, and a strange and sudden impulse caused him to stop and look more closely at

them to make sure. Just as he thought—there were Kaiky and Skinny.

Michael was hurried down into the basement, where he fell into his cottage line with the aid of a very severe side glance on the part of the Colonel, who, he was certain, now had it in for him. But Colonel Reilly affected him superficially only, at this time—there were too many exciting things to think about. The entire morning had been climaxed by the sight of his beloved friends, more beloved now than ever. The desire to see them was consuming—how would he ever wait through those awful two weeks of quarantine? Colonel Reilly never missed a chance to stare at him severely, and though he was not exactly afraid, he soon felt a peculiar tug at his heart, so that his face darkened a little, the expression of inward joy disappeared, and he became merely number thirty-three—one little culprit in an assemblage of many.

"Has every class gone down?" asked Miss Britter of a group of teachers, standing at the end of the long hallway.

Nida and Rolan waved an affirmative reply, which was not enough for Miss Brand, whose feigned respect for superiors caused her, as usual, to go into a dozen varieties of graceful muscular movement, and all lit up by smiles, answer, "As far as I know, Miss Britter."

Miss Britter on the other hand, incapable of feigning appreciation for that respect any longer, said, addressing herself to Nida and Rolan, "Wait for me, will you? I want to see Mr. Krammer. I will be out soon. We can go for a walk."

Mr. Krammer, as usual, with all the importance he could attach to his great amount of *avoids*, sat in his armchair figuring away at amounts spent, amounts received, and amounts expected and hoped for. When Miss Britter came in, he turned one of his little books over on papers on his desk, sat back in his seat, clasped his hands and prepared to listen.

"Mr. Krammer," she began, "I must have another High School teacher."

"I had one for you, but you weren't satisfied."

"Were you satisfied with him?"

"No, no, you didn't understand me. I didn't want him since he was as bad as you said he was, but I thought he might have stayed till we got another teacher to take his place."

"But, Mr. Krammer, I explained to you that from a psychological point of view," said Miss Britter, calmly, knowing that the word *psychology*, whenever she could possibly make use of it, due to its mystery in his mind, always defeated his arguments, "that it was much better to have the boys go on without a teacher than to leave them in the care of a man like Mr. Kurt. The class is already demoralized. They are impatient—have no respect for any one. I don't blame them, mind you. No one should have very much respect for such a man—he looks a degenerate. I say it would be better to send them out to work on the farm than keep them in school under these conditions."

"Oh, no, we can't send them out of school. We get seven cents a day for every boy in school. For such reasons the State will deduct those seven cents from their usual amount, and we can't afford that;

but I'll tell you what can be done. Suppose you take care of them for half an hour each morning and afternoon, so that we can mark them present, then, as you say, we can send them out to work on the farm, without losing the seven cents a day for each boy."

"But here is the point, Mr. Krammer, I was just choosing between two evils. You agree with me, surely, that to have a good teacher is better than either."

"Yes, yes, surely, but you can't get good teachers very easily. Good teachers are scarce."

"I have a very good teacher for you,—a college graduate, employed in the city High Schools now, willing to give up his good position there and come here for less money, because of his deep interest in the cause."

"Yes, I know to whom you refer, at least I think I know. Mr. Badgeman informed me of Mr. Liton. Isn't that the name?"

"Yes, Mr. Liton is the man."

"Yes, I thought so. But—aside from my hesitating to employ a man like Mr. Liton for very good reasons of my own, Mr. Badgeman, chairman of the appointing committee, has advertised for teachers and has received many applications, and they must be attended to fairly and in order."

"But what are your objections to a man like Mr. Liton?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Miss Britter. I am a man of experience, as I hope you know. I have been in this business for twenty years, probably more—I know these men. They are capable, but they come

into a place like this and in a week or two they want to run it."

"But Mr. Krammer, the man has much more of a chance for advancement where he is than he ever could have here, if that should be his object in life. He comes here because he wants to help the boys. He can do it—he is very capable and would be a very valuable help to you. I know him from conversing with him, and Mr. Rolan has known him for years. Besides, he has the letters of recommendation that commend him in the highest terms."

"Appointing is not in my province, as you know. There is a committee of appointment, and I have to abide by their doings. Besides, as Mr. Badgeman also informs me, he wants more than we can give him."

"He told me that he'd work for the forty-five you give to all men teachers."

"Then he changed his mind, I guess. Or, he may intend to work a month or so for that sum, then, after having settled himself, demand more. The man must be foolish to leave a position paying so much more and offering such advancement, for the one he would get here."

"I can not see why the question of salary should arise at all, when he told me that he was willing to come for what he could get. But suppose he should want five or ten dollars a month more, I don't see why he shouldn't get it if he's worth it. Five or ten dollars a month won't bankrupt this institution and may make it infinitely better. It seems to me that our experience here has proven that thirty-five dollar agency teachers are no economy from any point of view."

"They're good enough for me. We don't need any better kind, Miss Britter. That is your trouble—you want to do the impossible; you want to make poets out of these boys when they aren't capable of being good carpenters and shoemakers at present. After all, they come from a lower order of society, and if you can make a good faithful army of employees out of them to do the world's dirty work, you will really have done human kind a service."

Miss Britter's face grew red. This was meeting face to face the personification of evil that made the realization of her dream an impossibility. How can you talk to such a man? What hope is there for these unfortunate boys in his charge? She could have cried right there before him.

"You can expect a young lady here to-morrow to take charge of the High School class," said Mr. Krammer, to break the silence. "I believe her name is Miss Upstir. She is a Normal School graduate, and I believe has been head of a department in a town school in Pennsylvania."

Miss Britter hurriedly left his office and made for her own. She found everything as she had left it. Nida and Mr. Rolan were gone. She straightened a few of the papers on her desk and sat down to think. "Why should I stay here?" she kept asking herself over and over. "Surely there is some place in the world where I will be allowed to accomplish something."

A rap on the door startled her.

"Come in."

Miss Tick, the first-grade teacher, opened the door.

"Miss Britter," she began, full of excitement, "I have come to tell you that I am going to leave. I can not go on with the class any longer. I am not fitted to teach. Why did he make me do it? I came here as a stenographer. He kept telling me all along that it's only temporarily. It's almost a year now, and I am not going to stay any longer. It's unfair to the poor kids. They are learning nothing. I wasn't born a teacher and never studied for anything other than stenographer, and that wasn't my fault either—I wanted to study badly enough."

"That's just the way he's been doing things since I know him. Anything but the right thing. It really is most unfair to the pupils. He brought you here as a stenographer, let him give you such a position."

"He needn't do that either. I am sure I can get some kind of a position in the city. If the food were not so wretched, I'd make him give me a position as stenographer; but I really don't want to stay. You know, I get awfully sick. The food doesn't agree with me at all."

"Now, my dear, since you feel that way about it, please, for my sake and the sake of these children, do not allow him to persuade you to stay till he can get another teacher, because he will forget all about it."

"No, I won't. I allowed him to play that trick on me too many times already. Miss Britter, if I considered myself alone, I wouldn't object to being in that room. It would be nice and easy. But I feel that it is very unfair to the little fellows. Of course I do worry a little about getting another position, but

I feel that I have no right to take that into consideration."

"Please let me help you, Martha, will you?"

"Oh, no, I couldn't think of such a thing."

"But in case you are in need, you will write to me? But listen, I have some friends in the city, I will write to them and I'm sure they can help you get a good position."

"Yes, I would be thankful to you for that."

They outlined a plan of action, and left the office. Miss Tick, after promising to go into the superintendent's office the first thing in the afternoon and resign, went to eat her lunch, while Miss Britter took the road to the farm and down the wooded valley to the left.

"We waited, and waited, and waited, and waited for you, and finally gave up doing so, as you see," said Nida, referring to herself and Rolan when they met.

"I am sorry you waited. I didn't think it would take so long."

"What happened?" asked Mr. Rolan.

"They don't want him."

"He'll get in anyway. He'll corner them some way."

"I hope so." Miss Britter told in every detail just what had happened.

"I'm not fit to teach, either, for that matter," said Nida. "I was his confidential stenographer, when a vacancy occurred and I began to know too much about the workings of the institution, and he asked me to take the class. He'd put anybody in a classroom. Before you came he used to put that mule of a bookkeeper into the classroom, if the teacher was

absent or had left. I remember a time, when cottage fathers were allowed to substitute in the classroom, and would sit at the desk with a stick in their hands, while the boys were given large geographies and allowed to look through the books for pictures. The boys would get so sick of geographies they couldn't bear to look at them—then the stick would be made use of. Oh, those were great times!"

"But you can't say that about yourself, Nida. In your case he just happened to do the best thing. You had been here two years by that time, and had known and befriended every boy on the grounds. Besides you love the work and are interested in solving the problems before us. A college or training school diploma is not a guarantee of efficiency, as far as teachers are concerned. I would at any time prefer the teacher who loved her work and taught instinctively right, to the graduate of anything, if the diploma was all she had to offer. Miss Tick, however, hadn't been here more than a few months, when she was asked to take the first grade. She has had less of an education than you have, and she is not interested in the work. She is a very good girl though. Not many would have taken the stand she has taken."

"Aren't we going back for lunch?" asked Rolan.

"I don't care to."

"Neither do I."

"What are we going to do about it, anyway? We'll soon be skeletons."

"Let's go to Hilldale again to-night."

"That's becoming too expensive," said Nida.
"Our board and room are considered as part of our

salaries; the other part we have to use to make up the inefficiency and insufficiency of the first."

"Just wait till we settle this teacher business," said Miss Britter. "Wait until Mr. Liton comes, we'll then get after them for the bad food. At present it would do no good to complain about the food, and might do a lot of harm. You see our being particular is a part of the objection to good teachers."

"Isn't it terrible, though, to think that here we are ready to give the best that is in us for the good of the institution, and they can't as much as give us a decent meal."

"But they don't want you to give the best that is in you for this institution—they don't want good teachers. These boys are to be the world's dirty workers, and we interfere in the process of preparing them for it. This is no reformatory—it is merely a convenience. It is a place where boys who are troublesome are to be kept for a short time, regardless of what will happen to them afterwards. Society in this case is like the poor housekeeper that doesn't clean but merely transfers the dirt and other objectionable things, such as papers, and so forth, to where they won't be seen when the neighbor comes. Then when the corners get so full of dirt that it begins to slide back, she takes a day off and goes into a general and thorough housecleaning. Society has its penitentiary and electric chair for that."

"That's all that's the matter."

"Have you heard the latest?" asked Nida, after a few moments of silent walking. "There is something wrong with that woman. See how she smiled and fell all over herself as if nothing had happened."

"You mean Miss Brand?"

"Yes."

"Who started that rumor?" asked Rolan.

"It's no mere rumor. I know Jack; he's a reliable boy. He swears that he saw the watchman leave her room early yesterday morning. If this were the first time, it would be different; there would be an excuse for doubt. Why don't the boys start such rumors about other people?"

"I wonder whether that is some of the indecent back talk for which she sent Jack out to-day?" said Miss Britter.

"Think of it," went on Nida, "this is the third affair of its kind in the last three months, besides the experience I had personally with her."

"What was your experience?" asked Rolan, smiling significantly.

"Why, have you had any experiences with her?"

"What was yours?" repeated Rolan, still smiling.

"One night about six weeks ago, I was to meet one of the girls at the station. She was coming home late from the city, and was afraid to walk up here alone. I didn't care much about going to the station alone, and seeing Miss Brand's window, the only one lit up, I decided to ask her to go with me. When I came into the hallway half a dozen boys who had been trying to peep into her room dashed back to their sitting room where the rest of the boys were. I was very angry and was going to tell her about it. I rapped on her door, but received no answer. Being innocent of what it all might be, I rapped again and this time much harder. Then I heard an awful shifting about and finally her nervous voice, calling, 'Come in,' or something which

sounded like it, and I opened the door. There she sat, red as a beet, and not far from her sat Papa Bloate looking like a lost sheep."

"What did they say?"

"Oh, she tried to frame all kinds of excuses. She looked a sight. I couldn't stand it. Excusing myself, I escaped."

"Where was Mrs. Bloate?"

"It was her day off. She was in town."

"These are the people who teach in a reformatory. I sometimes feel like running off where I shall never hear of reformation again. One begins to feel that the so-called immoral and criminal, who are at least open about their immorality and criminality, are but a handful and extremely honorable as compared to the many so-called moral people, who hide their iniquity."

"Krammer knows all about it," said Nida. "He evidently likes such people. Two years ago we had a terrible time here with three such people. These women simply went wild. The things they did were horrifying. Reilly, himself, was discharged from the City Reformatory for immoral reasons but Krammer took him just the same."*

"Mind you," began Miss Britter, "she has the right to do as she pleases off the grounds, but here

*"_____ charged at the hearing that _____, trucker and in charge of the _____ cottage, and his wife, had been discharged from the schools for cruelty. They were engaged, he says, by the house of detention in this city and later discharged, whereupon they were rehired at _____ through _____ assistant superintendent. _____ says _____ is the official flogger of the institution at _____."—Philadelphia Times, Feb. 20, 1913.

where she is supposed to help in the instruction of morals—what a farce to allow such a woman to teach?”

“What’s the use?” said Rolan, “If Liton doesn’t come down here we might as well get jobs elsewhere.”

“Yet,” said Miss Britter, “If I were forced to leave this place I should go mad.”

“You know,” said Nida, “in the four years that I have been here I have packed my trunk a dozen times. I pack and write out my resignation, then I go out for a walk, and the thought of leaving these poor abused boys and the hills just breaks my heart and I tear up my resignation.”

“There is a fascination about the whole business, the boys, the hills, and so on, that outweighs my objections, too,” added Rolan.

They were just climbing up the hill on their way back to school when they saw “Eddy,” the shepherd boy, running towards them breathlessly. His pockets were bulging out with hickory nuts, and his arms were loaded with apples and flowers, all of which he unloaded hastily into their hands, beaming all the while. “I saw you go down the hill,” he said, “and I picked these for you to take with you when you came back.” With this he returned hastily to his sheep.

This had come as an appeal on the part of the boys as a whole, and in their hearts they answered it—no, no matter what would happen, they should not leave.

CHAPTER IX

SOME MORE TEACHERS

The next day brought a cold, clear autumn morning, and the bugle called its six o'clock message long after Miss Britter had already made a dozen different considerations for a dozen different boys, in the little note book she kept for the purpose. The usual sounds filled her with a kind of restlessness, and her own four walls became too small for her. She desired to go out and see the whole grounds, the whole beloved vista, perhaps frost-touched, the autumn sky, and *her* boys going to the flag-pole.

"Oh, no, whatever happens," she said to herself, and took a deep breath of cool air.

The cow-boys went for their cows quietly until they neared the barn, and were out of the Colonel's reach. Then they began singing and calling to each other so that they filled the air with gladness. The reformatory atmosphere was filled with the hurrying of little foot-falls and military commands, and, with the straight and rising smoke above the dining-room, came the smell of coffee and the sound of knives and forks and plates.

Miss Britter went for a walk, and came back in time for breakfast. At the table she was introduced as the principal to a very formal, wild-eyed, slightly deaf and very well-meaning lady, who was to take the High School class.

"Do you think I can manage it?" she asked very nervously, and Miss Britter was very sorry for her.

She had to do very little thinking about it—Miss Upstir lasted just one day.

"That horrible High School class is a hopeless lot of devils," sighed one of a small collection of cottage mothers, gathered in front of the dining-room, while the boys were hauling down the flag that evening.

"It's Miss Britter's angelic way of handling them," said another sarcastically, with a twist of her mouth.

"I am willing to wager," put in an unsuccessful circus lady, "that they never will find a teacher who will handle them."

"What they need," said a straight-looking blue-law cottage mother, "is a good sound beating by Colonel Reilly, and the coop for a few weeks with bread and water. I'd make 'em mind if I had the say. You find none of them cuttin' up much in my cottage. I got an old shoe that I use across the mouth now and then when they try to give me back talk."

Miss Britter, Miss Cane, and Mr. Rolan decided to dine out that evening, and when the last little fellow limped his way into the dining-room, they could have been seen making their way down the narrow path on a short cut to Hilldale.

"What are you going to do about her?" asked Rolan.

"I'm going to try her to-morrow in the first grade, and I can tell you *to-morrow only*. I simply will not let him send in such creatures to ruin my boys. Whatever she might have been able to do years ago, I am sure that no school of any importance would tolerate her, poor woman, now. She's a nervous

wreck and ought to have the opportunity to rest for the next five years or so."

"I have an idea," said Rolan, suddenly. "I am going to telephone to Liton and tell him that this woman is a failure, and that he should get at them from the other side."

"Good!"

"You remain out here and watch," said Rolan, when they reached the post office in Abolt, "and I'll go in and call him up. Should any of our gossiping friends be coming this way, you appear inside and I'll cut it short."

No gossips having shown themselves, Rolan was not disturbed and soon came out partly vexed and partly expectant.

"He's got something up his sleeve."

"Couldn't you converse with him?"

"Not much. He seemed to be with some one he did not wish to have hear about our scheme."

"What did he say?"

"'Will see you soon. Good bye,' was all he said, after greeting me. I felt that he wanted me to hang up the receiver, and so I did. He's making his way here, I'm thinking."

Hilldale, by the time they reached it, was all lit up, and Main street was thronged with people going in both directions and, probably, considering the usual, for every conceivable purpose.

The little restaurant to which they had acquired the habit of applying the possessive pronoun, *our*, was as gay and brilliant as ever, and the smell of its coffee, was most appetizing. One table was entirely unoccupied and seemed to have been waiting for them.

They reached the grounds that night long after the lights had been shut off. Mr. Rolan went to his quarters, and Nida and Miss Britter went to one of their cottages, and sat down where they could look into the dark valley and over the dark hill and its monastery towers and into the clear nocturnal autumn sky. They talked over many important things until the desire for sleep made great inroads upon their energy and they retired.

Miss Britter went to her office early next morning, and repeated to herself many times, "What shall I do with that High School class?" and finally concluded that unless she could take them herself, they would become uncontrollable. "I'll keep my doors open, and attend to the principal's duties as well." She accordingly began the preparation of her day's progress; but she had hardly completed half of it when the door opened and Nida, full of excitement, rushed in.

"Say, I heard a new rumor. Krammer got a telephone message last night that a new teacher is coming this morning, and from the excitement everywhere I take it that, much to Krammer's dismay, Liton has worked his way in, and is coming."

"The carriage meeting the early morning train ought to be here soon; let's watch for it."

"There it comes now."

The carriage stopped in front of the superintendent's cottage, and Mr. Krammer came out to meet it. When Mr. Liton stepped off, they shook hands.

Rumors had been spread explaining the desire on the part of his friends to get him into the service of Abolt School and the opposition met in doing so; and then, when many had delighted in the fact that

an additional believer in the angelic treatment of little criminals had been successfully barred from entering, he came. What excitement on the grounds!

Mr. Bloate and Mr. Gallwin even went so far as to defame his character within hearing of their boys, by slurring remarks. Boys do not need much of that kind of encouragement—they took all that for license, and were going to have some fun. Many of them, however, had so little respect for their officers that they were either indifferent or merely curious.

Mr. Liton, on the other hand, was not left uninformed; and knowing the circumstances, determined to keep absolutely cool, to say very little, and to accomplish as much as possible. He took in the entire situation with an eye half closed, and weighed his conclusions carefully.

He was angry at himself when, a little later, while arranging things in his room, he felt a growing nervousness at the sound of the first bell; but when he saw twenty of the largest boys in the reformatory march in quietly but with an occasional wink to each other, he sobered up. Every muscle in his face pulled tight and he gazed with an expression of "So you think so, do you?" and it had the desired effect.

Mr. Liton arranged the books on his desk, straightened out whatever about it was not straight and acted with a familiarity worthy of a teacher of experience and ability. Whatever fear he had was hidden within him; externally there was indifference and absorption in the work before him.

"I understand," he began slowly, "that you have been unfortunately losing a great deal of time. You

should be very much farther in your work than you are. In the City High School we are very much ahead of you. But we must lose no more time from now on. It may take me a day or two to find out just what you do and don't know.

"Our first lesson this morning will be in Ancient History. I know that you have already begun to study it, but to make sure that we understand each other, I want to begin from the very beginning, and whatever you show me that you know well enough we shall spend little time on.

"Have you ever asked yourselves just why we should spend our valuable time studying history—why we should study about these people who lived so long ago, did their work good or bad, and disappeared?"

"I don't think there is a real good reason," said one fellow.

"Because we should know what our ancestors did—that is education," said another.

"Who invented the steamboat?" asked Mr. Liton.

"Robert Fulton," several answered at one time.

"Did Robert Fulton invent one of those floating palaces that rush across the ocean from New York to Liverpool in a few days?"

"No," answered a tall fellow, smiling, "he invented a rickety old thing that crawled up the Hudson."

"How, then, did we get to the floating palaces?" Mr. Liton called upon a very thoughtful-looking fellow seated in back of the room apart from the others.

"Every generation," he began, and Mr. Liton heard a whisper from some part of the room to the

effect that Mr. Dictionary had begun to speak, but paid no attention to it, "improved a little upon it. The first generation made it a little better than Fulton, some one in the next generation made it still better, and so on." He sat down.

"Exactly. Now, then, who can tell me just what made each of these inventors improve a little upon what the previous one did?"

These were questions that anybody who could think at all could answer, and nobody stood any chance of making a fool of himself, and so everybody in the room wanted to answer. Interest was aroused, dictionary men were left alone, and the boys actually forgot that they had a new teacher, and that any fun was to be gotten from that fact. There was quite a little flutter of hands and Mr. Liton, delighted with the excitement, called upon a little fellow who was almost out of his seat with the desire to have his small hand reach as far as that of his bigger fellows.

"The first man after Fulton," he began, "studied Fulton's old boat and found that he could make it better. He invented a number of small parts that made it better and so did the others."

"Well, then," went on Mr. Liton, "the whole world of people is just like that boat." He was interrupted by another flutter of hands, and called on another fellow.

"I know why we should study history," he blurted out in fear that some one might get ahead of him.

"Why?"

"So that like the fellows that studied Fulton's old

boat, we should study how the people before us did everything, so we can do things better."

"Very good. But not only how they did things, but how they thought and acted towards each other. People, by studying those that lived before them and themselves, began to act less cruelly toward each other; they began to live cleaner and think and work more, and, in short, they improved their condition. They saw the mistakes their fathers made and stopped making them themselves. For instance, once upon a time, men were put into jail and even killed for being in debt, for owing another man some money. Then the world began to see that it did not stop people from getting into debt; that they got into debt because they had to. So they were ashamed of their fathers who killed men for it, and stopped it."

Many instances of how the world became wiser and better were cited by different boys, and Mr. Liton finally called on some one to make a statement that would be good to use as an answer to the question, "Why do we study history?" and the boy called Mr. Dictionary, sitting in back of the room, offered to do so.

"We study history," said he, "that we should learn the mistakes our forefathers made and avoid making them ourselves, thus improving the race," and every boy agreed that that was a good answer and wrote it down in his note book.

Mr. Liton then went on with the beginning of history. He drew a very vivid mental picture of our barbarous ancestors, making their way down from the unknown central Asia to India and Greece. Then he returned to the barbarians on their way to

India. A discussion was held, from which was developed the fact that these barbarous people were in the main shepherds, that that occupation filled them with "wunderlust," and led them to go farther and farther, even encroaching upon the lands of their less strong neighbors.

The response on the part of the boys was a stimulant to Mr. Liton, who was bubbling over with enthusiasm himself, and when he found himself, swinging naturally and noiselessly to Algebra and English Literature, and when he saw that these little criminals were waxing hotter and hotter with enthusiasm as they went along, his delight was most intense, for he realized that his success was made; and at noon, when Miss Britter informed him that the boys were wild with excitement, spreading the rumor that they now had the best teacher they ever had had, he said: "There is no telling what wonders these boys will yet show. I never had so bright a class."

CHAPTER X

NEW FORCES

Kaiky and Skinny, whose real names were respectively Richard (or Dick) Kennen, and Ludwig (or Lud) Dampfel, were detained only one week in quarantine, and, after the desired discharge was made by Mr. Sarving, they were taken, like all the rest of the newcomers, to Cottage One.

Michael was beside himself for joy. Every moment of freedom was spent together, on the pile of stones, in a corner of the playground, in the basement, or at recess on the fence back of the school grounds.

They were seated on the pile of stones one afternoon a few days later, and talking things over in a confidential manner, when Mr. Bloate, to whom such conduct spelled conspiracy, approached.

"Mike," he called out, "come here! Did you patch them stockings?"

"No, sir, Mrs. Bloate has us do that after play time."

"Play time nothing. You should have done that yesterday, after play time."

"I wanted to, but I had lots of other things to do then, too," said Michael, angrily, feeling that this was but a pretext to keep him from his friends.

"Too bad about you. You'd better stand on line for the rest of the afternoon."

"I *did* have other things to do, and Mrs. Bloate told me to do them," said Michael, crying.

"Back talk again!" cried Mr. Bloate, "William, you see that this fellow stands on line for the rest of the week."

Poor Michael swallowed his anger, wiped a few tears off his cheeks, and stood himself up with his face to the wall, and his back to the playground and the boys. Was ever a boy's lot more bitter!

Kaiky and Skinny who had introduced themselves to the boys as Dick and Lud, were very angry at this, but remained where they were on the pile of stones, until Father Bloate disappeared, taking William with him; then they stole up towards Mike with the intention of keeping him company.

"Look out for 'im," Michael warned.

But they didn't look out, and he came out and caught them. He merely looked at them, however, until they crawled away, then returned to his work inside. But Father Bloate was of the opinion that there was a conspiracy there to run away, and watched. Sure enough, they were trying to get back again. He watched from a tiny hole in the window blind of one of the basement windows.

Dick worried a little about this playing with fire, and soon went off with some of the other boys to play a game of handball; but Skinny Lud was more faithful and, despite the warnings of his friend, thinking that his own weakness would protect him now as usual, remained with Michael and continued the conversation, exchanging dirty cigarette picture cards, with which they had played.

Father Bloate was determined to fix the "kid." He made his way out through the front door and crept along the side of the wall. A boy who saw what was coming turned his back on the scene

and yelled "Cheese it!" But poor Lud was too busy to take the warning. One of the little pictures had fallen to the ground and he stooped to pick it up. Before he could rise again, Bloate's hand was upon his neck, and he was dragged down into the basement, and from there into the engine room, the most popularly hated corner of each cottage. Shutting the door so that no amount of crying might penetrate and reach any ears without, Father Bloate grabbed a broken broomstick and commenced the first and most terrible beating in all Skinny's underfed life.* He begged and screamed and danced, but of no avail. Then he feigned a fainting spell, and finally fainted in earnest. So weak had his little system always been that a hard slap or a twist of his arm was often enough to make him faint. Skinny fainted, and, had some kindly spirit been about, to direct the course of things with a philanthropic purpose, Skinny would never have awakened from his faint. But the spirit of destiny is neither wise nor kind, and Skinny did awake—a different kind of a boy. All the playfulness was beaten out of him, and now he was truly sick—sick in mind and body.

Out doors, the few who had their play time that day were gathered into a line once more, waiting for those who scrubbed and cleaned and dusted to leave their dirty rags, to wipe their wet and chapped hands, and fall in with them, to straighten up in spite of aching backs and knees, and to join the soul-killing marches to the flag-pole and dining room.

At the supper table, Ludwig ate very little. His yellow face bore the expression of his share of the

*See newspaper articles in appendix.

world's misery, and was not only weak-looking but sad, making one feel that, if he only dared to, he would cry again and keep on crying, for the bitterness was still heavy upon his little heart. Mrs. Bloate was a woman, and the maternal spark still left smouldering within her heart by the artificial relations she had felt and kept towards these outcast children, was awakened. She walked towards him and told him to eat more. She brought him a nice little cake that she had procured from the staff tables, and not one of the boys about him was jealous of the act. In fact, all those boys would have given him the very best they could conceive of had that been possible, they were so sorry for him.

After supper, and when out on the heap of stones, Michael and Dick and all the rest of the boys of Cottage One who were not cleaning up the dining room and kitchen, gathered about him, and tried in their childish ways to make him forget his troubles, till Father Bloate came out and told Michael and several others to attend to their mending.

The bell on the front door of Cottage One rang, and Mrs. Bloate went to answer it.

Mr. Liton greeted her with a pleasant "Good evening," when she opened the door, and she half-heartedly smiled in reply.

"Mrs. Bloate," he began, "I have come to organize your cottage into a club. May I have the boys in the sitting room?"

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Bloate, "we have a lot of mending to do tonight, and I can't bother with clubs just now."

"But you needn't bother at all, Mrs. Bloate, I will attend to that. I merely want the boys. I would

be very glad to have your coöperation, but if it is a bother to you, I can attend to it myself."

"They had a club anyway, and nothin' came of it—they don't care enough about it."

"That isn't the point, Mrs. Bloate. Mr. Krammer has asked me to organize all the cottages, and has ordered all to coöperate with me. If you don't wish to work with me, why leave it to me, but it's got to be done."

"Many of the boys aren't home now; they are detailed in the dining room."

"The Colonel promised to detain none of the boys of Cottage One to-night. They ought to be here."

"Well they're not."

"Then I will go back and get them, and will return in about fifteen minutes."

Mr. Liton soon returned with the missing boys, and William ordered all to "fall in" to be marched into the sitting room.

The sitting room, like those in all the other cottages, was divided into halves by the unused fireplace in the center of the longest wall. Curtains covered the windows, and mission picture frames, in harmony with the mission furniture, hung upon the walls, enclosing a few old-time sentimental pictures and one large print—a portrait of Washington. The room in general was very neat and rich-looking, so that the sallow faces, the somewhat ragged clothes and the wet eyes that formed a semi-circular mass about Mr. Liton and his little table, seemed very much out of place. William stood in the rear with a long stick in his hand and any boy that did anything not to his liking, he punished by

a whack with that stick. This was done several times before Mr. Liton lost his patience.

"William," he said, "I don't know what you may have been accustomed to do at other meetings; but you will please leave the boys entirely in my charge when I'm in the room."

"I want you to feel," he began addressing the club with a sincere appealing expression on his face, "that this is your meeting and to be your club when organized. During these meetings you are to forget the meaning of superiority. You are as good as I am and I am as good as you are. We are all citizens and brothers. If I am bigger than you are, I am merely a big brother. You must feel free to ask all the questions you like, and to say just what you want to say. But, you know, that at all meetings that men hold they do not talk all at once, because nothing could ever be done if they did. If you wish to say something, ask for the "floor," and one at a time you will have the chance to say what you please. Of course, too, if any boy talks to his neighbor, it will be hard for the rest of us to hear what's going on, so you will please not do that.

"Now, to-night we have two things to do, this being our first meeting. We must get to understand what this club is for, and then we must organize—elect officers, so that next week some time we can begin to do our real work. The purpose of this club is to unite all the boys into a republic, and this republic is to exist for the benefit of every boy. That is, with it you will have the chance to do a great many things for your own good and happiness. We want to learn more; and we want to have more fun and good times; and we want to do many other

interesting things. We can have a literary committee that can arrange for parties, with recitations and readings, and debates. I should like to see you publish a school magazine. This committee, too, can see about that. You can write stories and poems, and publish them. With a magazine you could do many other things, but we'll talk about that later, or let you do your own thinking about it. We can also have an athletic committee that can make arrangements for ball games and athletic sports in general.

"We will have a council made up of a representative from each cottage and class room, that will fight for the interests of the boys, try to avoid reports where possible, and help them in a thousand ways.

"I think most of the trouble in this world comes from somebody's not understanding something somebody else said or did. A boy gets into trouble at school very often, not because he is mean or wants to do what is wrong, but because he doesn't understand something the teacher wants. If teachers, cottage parents and boys understood what was wrong between them, we would have no reports and no trouble. This council will look into all the troubles between the teachers and the boys and will see that both understand each other, and in that way, wherever possible, keep reports away.

"When you show Mr. Krammer that you like your republic and will live up to your constitution and all its by-laws, which you will make as agreements between each other and the officers for everybody's good, he will let you go out with us for long walks in the woods, and will let you do many other

things that you can't do now. Perhaps we can get a photography outfit. I can teach you how to take pictures, so that we can take our cameras with us on these walks, make pictures of the scenery about this place, and then hang them up in our class rooms and cottages. We can do many, many interesting things, and you will be a happy set of boys if you work for this republic and help it grow strong. You must think of it all the time and work for it every chance you get. It will be yours, and everything you do for it you will be doing for yourselves. By *you*, in this case, I mean all of you boys."

Every face beamed with new life, and every eye flashed with excitement, every little soul bubbled with enthusiasm and hope. Some rose to give their ideas, others, unable to contain themselves bent over to tell their important plans to their neighbors, while many, whipped into stupidity, sat, their faces flushed, contented to let their neighbors plan that they might do whatever was bid.

The club was named and organized. A strong set of officers was elected, and Mr. Liton expressed his regret at having to go, and wished them "Good night."

He was answered by more than thirty individual "good nights" and a round of applause that lasted till he was outside of that cottage and on his way to the next.

It made no difference what cottage he went to, one reputed as bad, or another ordinarily good, all responded alike—with overwhelming enthusiasm.

"They were nice with me the first day, too," Mr. Liton repeated to himself, and laughed. It was not the first day only that made Miss Brand and others

wonder how he did it. The terrible High School class that had been *uncontrollable* responded with almost sentimental emotion. The boys loved Mr. Liton, and when visitors came next Sunday, they were asked to look sharp at the "young man over there," because he was the "best man that ever came to that institution," and this was the boy's own opinion against the defaming attempts of their *superiors*. The Republic, the photographic class, the magazine—nothing else was talked about. Parents were asked to bring small cameras, pencils and special kinds of copy books for stories and poems, and many boys spent much of their time writing them, for before long the editorial desk was packed with manuscripts.

The organizing week had passed, and three hundred and more boys were organized into the Republic of Abolt, with committees to draw up the constitution and by-laws; and the following Friday afternoon was the day set for a popular meeting for the adoption of the constitution.

The Committee on Constitution worked very hard, and at the meeting on Thursday evening, in Mr. Liton's class room, it was completed, but so busily had they been working there that no one thought of the hour till the first bugle blew.

"Come boys, we must hurry out or we'll be late," said Mr. Liton; but hardly had he finished the sentence when the door broke open and the inspiring figure of the Colonel kept back the draught.

"Do you know that it's late?" he shouted.

"It is not late yet—we are going now," returned Mr. Liton.

Out doors the autumn night was cool, calm and very dark. The sky was covered with myriads of bright stars and the valleys were filled with shadows. The boys shrugged their shoulders, thrust their hands into their pockets, and instinctively started on a hop and run.

One boy would ring the front door bell, as soon as they reached a cottage, and announce the number of boys returned, and the boys announced would run down the side path to the rear of the cottage, where they belonged.

"Strange," thought Mr. Liton, "these cottages were erected as homes for these boys, yet only the rear of every cottage belongs to them—for their use. The beautiful entrance in front they never use."

"Good night, Mr. Liton, thank you," was called out at each cottage, as many times as there were boys returned.

"Where is George?" demanded Mrs. Gallwin, when they arrived at her cottage.

"George has been with us at our council meeting; he is here now."

"This cannot happen any more, I won't have it. That's all there is to it."

"Since you talk that way, Mrs. Gallwin, I have nothing to say to you."

"You *will* say something to-morrow," she thundered back.

Mr. Liton paid no more attention to her, but continued the round, explaining to the remaining number of boys what the Milky Way was, where to find the Dipper, and a number of other things that proved him to be a very wise man, in their opinions.

The last boy was finally taken to his cottage and Mr. Liton, alone, turned and started back towards the school. Before he had gone many steps, he was met by the Colonel.

"Mr. Liton," began Colonel Reilly, "those lights are in your room, ain't they?"

"Yes, I guess they are."

"Well, they shouldn't be left on."

"I'm going back now, I'll turn them out."

"Mr. Liton, do you know them boys must be home by the first bugle?"

"I know all that."

"Y'didn't this evening."

"I will see that we get out before the first bugle, but you must give them to me in time."

"I give them to you when I can."

"That doesn't mean anything. You gave them to me this evening three quarters of an hour later than you promised to give them to me—we have an hour and a half altogether."

"We'll have to settle that some other way," he grunted, and turned to go. "We can't bother with that club business altogether. You ain't the first one that's tried it here."

Mr. Liton turned out the lights in his room and in the hallway, and filled that hallway with the sound of his lonely steps on his way out.

"Goin' to the village?" asked Mr. Grames, the dining room man, when he saw Mr. Liton take the path down the valley.

"Yes, I am. Are you?"

"Sure! Let's go together," said Mr. Grames.

"Good! Going for a walk?"

"A walk? No, I'm going for a drink and a smoke.

They don't give you a chance to smoke on the grounds—I don't know why."

"It's against the rules, is it?"

"Yes, but most of us don't care much about them rules, believe me. We fellers work on the principle that so long you're not caught I guess it's all right! Hey!"

"Have you been here long?"

"Just a week, but I know them institutions—I came here from another one. They're all alike. I got into a row with the principal over there and I chucked up the job. First day I come here, I got the job. That there superintendent of yours is a foxy feller—he's a down right smart feller. He saw all right what he was gettin'. I may not be a dude, but for teachin' plumbin' and makin' kids mind, there ain't many like myself. Over at the last institution I worked, I did all their plumbin' for 'em and they were down right sorry to see me go. From the first down, I suppose in all the institutions I worked for there is some pipe busted or other." Here he started a hideous laughter that rang through the woods.

"You have worked in several institutions then, have you?"

"This is the fourth."

"You like to work in them?"

"Like to work in them?" He stopped to look at Mr. Liton. "Naw—guess not. I wouldn't be here now, if I could help it. I can make kids mind, but I am tired of 'em. Sometimes I half murder 'em. You got to watch them every minute, or they'll turn on you. My hand here hurts yet from a whack I gave one fellow this morning. They won't back talk

me much when they get to know me. No, I wouldn't 'a come here either makin' them little thieves scrubbin' floors and dishes—that ain't much of a job and hasn't much advancement attached to it. I am a plumber by trade, and he promised me the plumbin' on the place and to teach them kids plumbin' at seventy-five bucks a month. He isn't goin' to keep me waitin' long for it either."

They reached a saloon near the village, and Mr. Liton was invited to have a drink.

"No, thank you, I'm going down further," he insisted.

He had hardly finished his sentence, when a boy dressed in the institution suit issued from the saloon carrying what seemed to be a large beer can wrapped in a newspaper. The boy made for the woods and was lost.

"See that fellow? He's the hospital boy. John Downer'll be caught some day."

"Who is John Downer?"

"Downer's the engineer at the power house. He sends this hospital boy for beer at night, when he's supposed to be in bed, and Colonel Reilly makes believe he doesn't know it. They smoke there too, when they ain't supposed to. Downer and that *Henglish* nurse over there. That ain't right. I go for my drink and my smoke when I want 'em."*

With this, he entered the saloon, and the discouraged teacher went on his way to Abolt.

He wandered about the single street a few moments, had a little ice cream, and made for a round-about pathway to lengthen his way home. When he

*The practice referred to is not uncommon.

reached the dark end of the village he felt some one walking behind him, and turned half way about to get an idea of what kind of a follower it might be.

"Going home, Mr. Liton?" asked a woman's voice.

"Yes, good evening, Miss Brand," said Mr. Liton recognizing her.

"Good evening. Do you like this pathway, too?" she asked fairly beaming in the darkness. "I just love it, especially at night."

"Aren't you afraid?"

"Oh, no. Nobody wants to hurt me. Would you?"

"I? I guess not."

"Oh, we never can tell who wants to hurt us, you know. Our best friends sometimes do."

"Yes, taking it philosophically, I suppose I must agree with you."

They walked on for a short distance quietly, then Miss Brand ventured again, "You are not afraid to walk home with me in the dark, are you?"

"Afraid of what?"

"Oh, I thought you might be conventional."

"No, I'm not conventional," he answered, smiling. "I have a great deal of faith in my own opinions of right and wrong, and as much as they may differ with those of some others, I usually act upon them."

"So do I. I am afraid of nobody. What is this, a swamp? Wouldn't it be nice if we got lost and had to stay here all night?"

"Do you think it would be so very nice?"

"I wouldn't care. I'm just that kind, I wouldn't care a bit."

It was a great relief to see the reformatory lights; and when he finally got into his own room he threw his hat down upon the table and sighed, "This is a great place."

CHAPTER XI

NEW EFFECTS

The dawn of Friday morning forced its way through a heavy moisture-laden atmosphere, and the six o'clock bugle came in fairly dripping with rain. Dark gray clouds gathered in the valleys and shut out the view on either side. A heavy wind blew, and the rain beat down upon the golden leaves it tore from the trees on the roadsides and in the forest.

Like every other morning, in obedience to the call of the bugle boy, the boys put on their thin canvas jackets, pulled their canvas caps down upon their eyes, and formed the line out doors in the rain.* Their cottage father and mother, protected by rain coats and umbrellas, stood beside them, waiting for the next bugle call. What a sight to see the groups pouring into the main roadway from each cottage, all backs bent and every coat saturated. Mr. Liton looked and was miserable.

"I am really ashamed to wear this," he thought putting on his rain coat, then prompted by a second and more forcible thought he pulled it off again. "No, I will not. If they have to live through it, I shall, too."

Hanging it up again, he started towards the flag-pole. The air was very cool, and the rain drops soon penetrated his clothes, but he felt a sort of relief when he passed them. "They, standing with

*This senseless regulation exists in many reformatories.

their backs bent, shivering in the wet and cold, will not envy me at least."

In the warmer dining room the air was stifling. The smell of so much wet clothes was very unappetizing. Mr. Liton sat at the table without touching the proverbial prunes, the disgusting platter of farina, over full, or the soggy bread and butter, and bad eggs; and he gazed. The staff was served by boy waiters, who enhanced their professional appearance by hanging dirty towels from their belts; who were more anxious about what the staff did not eat than what they did eat, for as soon as one cottage father or teacher left his or her seat some boy waiter would dash to the place and appropriate what prunes, egg, or coffee cake, when it was served, was left untouched or half eaten. When the dining room was cleared, they uncovered their spoils, carried them to their tables and devoured them.

Mr. Liton was disgusted. He joined the rest of the teaching force and all ran for the school building, to minimize the effects of the unceasing rain. Boys here and there, through the mist, ran about the grounds with bent backs, like shadows.

"Mr. Krammer," said Miss Britter to him later in the day, "we are going to have a meeting this afternoon for the adoption of the constitution of the republic Mr. Liton has formed, and would like to have you present to hear it read and to say something to the boys about it."

"Gladly. You send a boy into my office a few minutes before you want me there, and I will come."

"This is to be a republic, the purpose of which, according to your own wishes, is to be to teach the boys the value and meaning of self-government,

Don't you think it rather funny, Mr. Krammer, to have the assembly watched by officers in uniform at such a meeting?"

"Well, that can't be helped—we can't have them run away."

"But I know they won't run away."

"You think you do, but I'm very much afraid you don't. Wait till you have been in this business for twenty years as I have."

"But, Mr. Krammer, I don't think it is fair to us, either. We are in charge of the school. We are organizing a republic. Why should we have to call upon cottage fathers to act as police and help us do *our* work? If we are strong enough or good enough to take care of classes of them and clubs of them, why can't we take charge of them in the assembly? I for one refuse to be there if the officers are there. I don't want the boys to feel that I am afraid of them."

Mr. Krammer became very uneasy and almost showed his anger; realizing, however, the importance of controlling those feelings he turned to her with a slight frown and said, "If you wish to try it this afternoon, you may, but mark, Miss Britter, if the least thing goes wrong you can never try it again."

"I am more than willing to take the risk."

"All right, then. But think it over before you act upon it. If they can't be kept quiet with officers and sticks about, they surely will not be kept quiet without them. You cannot make angels of them in a week, nor in a year. You will learn that with more experience. I have handled a good many boys in my days."

"Would you please ask Mr. Reilly to invite the cottage parents as guests?"

"Certainly."

By noon the rainy day had changed into a gray windy one, and before it was time to assemble, the sun occasionally peeped out and cheered everything up a bit, touching with light the golden hillsides.

What excitement! The officers, denied their duties to stand guard in the assembly and watch, and discourage, when possible, the foolish attempts to make angels out of them, embittered as they were, seemed overjoyed and hopeful, smiling and whispering their expectations. "Half the boys at least will run away."

Miss Britter visited every class room before the meeting was to be held, and asked the boys whether they were anxious to go to this meeting. And, answered enthusiastically in the affirmative, she said to them, "This republic is to give you the chance to govern yourselves like decent men. Are you going to show us that you can govern yourselves? Are you going to show us that you needn't be watched, that you know enough to be quiet when it is necessary to be quiet? Do you want Mr. Liton, who is working very hard to arrange all kinds of interesting things for you—who is giving up all of his time to make you happier, do you want him to go on with his work? Do you want to have the magazine, the photography classes, and the walks in the woods? Then let us see that you do by the way you act this afternoon. Let us see whether you aren't sensible enough to help yourselves. I am going to depend on you then. To show you that you are going to your own club meeting for your own good, I am

going to abolish the 'hip' business in your marching down. You may march out quietly, in an ordinary full step walk and do the same below."

The boys were wild with excitement. Something surely was happening about the place. A happier time was surely coming, and they worshipped Miss Britter and Mr. Liton, who seemed to be the cause of it all.

Never before did they march down so quietly and so orderly. Some of the boys shoved out their chests, pressed their outstretched arms close against their sides, to make sure that it be seen how anxious they were to do what was right, growing red in the face doing it; and marched down on tip-toes.

They were soon settled quietly in the assembly room, surprised and greatly honored to see no policeman about.

The representatives proudly took the seats provided for them, each filled with the importance of being a representative of a whole cottage or a whole class room, while their respective fellows were glad to see the particular boy they voted for given a seat on the platform.

Miss Britter spoke first:

"Boys," she began, "We are met to-day to establish a republic. That is we are determined to make ourselves happier and stronger in mind and body. We are determined to have more fun, learn more, and govern ourselves. We are to make laws, agreements between ourselves and those who work with us, for the good of everybody. People can not live together without coming to an agreement about things that they may or may not do. Two men go into business and draw up certain laws that each

will have to obey for the good of the establishment. There are many things we want to do, that may make trouble for others, and the things others want to do may make trouble for us—make us unhappy. To avoid that, we draw up sets of laws that prohibit us from doing things that will interfere with the people with whom we have to live, and if everybody lives up to those laws, and nothing is done that is harmful to anybody, everybody can be happy.”

She then went on telling them what interesting things they were planning for, until the door opened and Mr. Krammer came in and took his seat, a surprised individual.

She went on, running over the day's programme very rapidly, and announcing that Mr. Staver, a cottage father, had brought his talking machine and some very beautiful musical records for their pleasure.

Mr. Staver placed a record of a violin solo on the machine, and the concert began.

It was a revelation to even the most radical and optimistic believer in reformation to see that silent assembly of boys, listening, with eyes fixed on one point, or half, or all, closed. One little fellow came from a home where they loved music and had heard this very solo, and it brought recollections that were very painful to him—he cried.

Several other solos were played, the boys applauding very warmly, and their attention was then directed to the real purpose of the meeting. The secretary of the council arose and called the roll of representatives. One member of the council moved that Mr. Liton be asked to read the constitution that

everybody in the room be able to hear it, and the motion was carried.

The constitution outlined the different divisions of government, which resembled as much as possible that of the government of the United States. The preamble declared the purpose of the republic to be—Self-Government. The executive department was to consist of the body of cottage presidents. The legislative department was to consist of one representative from each cottage and each class room. This body was to be called the "Council." Aside from creating laws, the work of the legislative department was to act as a sort of judicial body to try all cases of boys charged with working against the republic or neglecting the duties it imposed upon them.

There were to be two committees. A literary committee was to provide literary programmes for festivals and meetings, arrange debates and promote the possibilities of a magazine, and when such a magazine was published, get material for it from the citizens at large. An athletic committee was to arrange for athletic sports for the physical development of all the citizens, especially those who are most in need of it.

All laws made by the legislature must be first endorsed by the executive department, then submitted to the superintendent for his approval, and finally voted upon by the citizens.

The council formally submitted the constitution to the executive department, which body voted for it unanimously, and then submitted it to Mr. Krammer for his approval.

Mr. Krammer said that, as far as he could see at the time, he had no objection to it. He thought it was very good and hoped that it would be adopted and respected. He told the boys that he had long hoped for such a republic and that now that it was about to be realized, he was very happy.

The chairman of the council then rose and, offering the constitution to the citizens at large, requested those who were in favor of adopting it as it stood to rise.

Every boy was on his feet, immediately. The constitution was unanimously adopted, and the by-laws were promised by the committee that was to draw them up for the following Friday afternoon meeting.

Mr. Krammer left the room.

Mr. Liton then got up and made a few very enthusiastic remarks on the work accomplished, and concluded with an appeal to every boy to write something for the first number of the magazine, which he hoped would be out within a few weeks.

The boys were then left in charge of the disappointed officers who had been sent for, and he went to see the superintendent.

"How did you like it, Mr. Krammer?"

"Very well, indeed."

"Mr. Krammer, I have come to tell you what experiences I had in trying to find a printer."

"What were those experiences?"

"I went all over town. All but one wanted forty dollars each month; the one offered to turn out a very beautiful magazine of sixteen pages for twenty-five dollars."

"Impossible! No use of thinking about it."

"How much did you think it would cost?"

"Oh, I thought it would amount to about ten dollars. I could possibly give ten dollars out of my salary for such a purpose, but twenty-five is out of the question."

"Suppose we make up the rest of it, would you give us the ten dollars each month?"

"Yes, as I said, I will do that, but I can't possibly give another cent."

"Some of the boys suggested selling them to their parents."

"Oh, no, we mustn't do that."

"One boy suggested that they all give up their good behavior money."

"Let's see, that is so. They get ten cents a month for good behavior—we have a fund for that—and I suppose they have the right to do what they want with what they earn that way. It amounts to about fifteen dollars a month, too. Well, if they are willing, we can do that."

"Good, we'll put it to a vote at our next meeting."

"I guess that's satisfactory."

Mr. Liton passed out, a very happy man. He hurried to Miss Britter's office to tell her the good news, and started for his own room to plan his work for the following week. Mr. Reilly was standing near a hall window, watching a cottage father outdoors, when Mr. Liton was about to enter his class room.

"That's a mighty big piece of power you have taken to yourself, Mr. Liton," said the Colonel, sarcastically.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Well, may be you don't. We'll have a tough proposition here if you're going to make them kids think any more of what you have made them think already."

"I don't know what you are referring to, and if you want me to answer you, you will have to tell me what it is."

"Them kids think that no officer, even I, can give them a report now, since you and your republic won't let any one do that. And I'm going to 'give a couple of them a good big dose to wake them up.'"

"Nonsense. Our Republic made no such arrangements, and I am willing to say that no boy was ever mistaken on that point to such an extent."

"You are *willing* to say it all right, but I have proof against you, and there are several cottage parents to witness to it."

"I see. You have already been collecting evidence and are expecting a trial. However, tell me how you became aware of this idea."

"I didn't have to do any collectin' of evidence; it came right plump to me and will come to anybody else that cares to find out. That dictionary fool in your class, that conceited Ernest Andree, thinks he can come around and tell me what to do, since you have discovered him as a genius. He calls Mr. Saunders a liar because he knows the republic won't let him get a report for back talk."

"Is that what he said, or it is your interpretation of it?"

"I'm not being cross-examined by you nor by any one else. I fixed him, and he'll be scrubbin' kitchen floors for a month or so, and you take it

from me, he'll be a better citizen than your club will ever make him."

"I want you to remember, Mr. Reilly, that though I wasn't going to cross-examine you, some of the boys will be cross-examined for good reasons, and I for one won't let any cottage father or any one else for that matter, conspire against that republic without proving a few side issues. You have set yourselves against that republic when you ought to work for it—we are all working for the benefit of the school. I want to work with you and not against you. I don't see why you should want to work against me."

"I don't want to work against the republic or you, but you are new in the business, and think that you know more about it than anybody else. You don't know that it has been tried several times before, and has always been a complete failure and will be this time too. I'm against its makin' matters worse."

"If you have always acted as you people act now, I don't wonder that it always has been a failure. I feel that you are all against this republic because of—. Well, the reasons are more familiar to you than to me. Because you heard that Ernest is considered by us a genius, and that we intend to have him elected as editor of the magazine; you and his cottage father, Mr. Saunders, have conspired against him, and he is now scrubbing floors because he knows too much."

"You are dreaming all that in your own head. I laugh at your republic because you think it's goin' to amount to anything. The magazine you talk about—huh, you have no magazine yet!"

"You leave that to me."

"The whole trouble with you, Mr. Liton," began the Colonel somewhat more softly, "is that you don't know much about these angels of yours, and you're makin' it tougher for us."

"I am making it tougher for you because you don't treat them right and we do, and they respect us more. That's the trouble."

"They'll respect you another week or so and then you'll learn a thing or two."

"That is possible, if you keep on working against us; but not without a good stiff fight on our part, let us assure you."

"You don't know these fellows, that's the trouble with you. You don't know how they steal. These boys here are the slickest thieves you ever saw. If you knew the system they have of robbing the storehouse of provisions and what not, without my being able to stop it with all my watching and punishing! Last week they stole the key to the store room and got away with all manner of things, and all of us watching. After visitor's day I can expect all kinds of money passed around, and some of those angels in your class room are the slickest thieves of all. Do you see that Tifton in your class room? Why we trusted him and had him watch other boys, and everybody would have sworn to his honesty. I caught him with the goods yesterday, and found that during the past year, when I had him watch at the gate to keep children from coming in with visitors, he actually begged from most of his friends coming in, and during the year supplied any boy that wanted to run away with carfare to the city. You don't know

them, I tell you. They are nothing but a *bunch of little thieves*, every one of them."

Mr. Liton laughed very heartily, to the exasperation of the Colonel, "Don't you think that proves them to be bright, Mr. Reilly? But look here. If those boys were fed decently they wouldn't be stealing in the store house. If they were not treated as some of our friends treat them, they wouldn't want to run away and wouldn't have to steal or beg to be able to do it. I think they are very bright, and with the right treatment that brightness could make good men of them."

The Colonel looked at him as if he were crazy, then without saying a word, turned and walked away.

Mr. Liton fixed up his class room, and went to look for his friends, whom he found in Miss Britter's office.

"Did you hear what happened to poor Ernest?" Nida asked him as soon as he entered the office.

"I heard that he was put to scrubbing the kitchen floor."

"They positively hate that boy," said Rolan, "I have seen many instances of that."

"Does he give them the dreaded *back talk*, or what is the matter?"

"He is too frank. He says what he thinks, regardless of what may result. He is extremely precocious. He knows more than most of his teachers, and so much more than his cottage parents that they dislike him for it. Mr. Krammer has always kept him in his office to do a great deal of his office work, which he can do, as Mr. Krammer himself told me, better than either Lapin or Miss Trunch;

now they have succeeded in raking up charges against him to suit Krammer, and to spite us, have detailed him to the kitchen, where all will join hands in revenging upon him."

"Let's go for a walk."

"I'm good for a long one."

"So am I. Let's go to Hilldale in our round-about way, and have dinner there this evening."

They struck the path and hurried down at break neck speed, soon finding themselves in the heart of the autumn worn valley. The red and gold and old green still lit up the neighborhood, but many trees were already leafless, and, in spite of the sunlit afternoon, there was an ominous feeling of winter hovering about the valley and hanging down from the hills.

"How beautiful it is here!"

"It is the most beautiful place I have ever seen," said Nida, "and were it not for dining room and other conditions, I should be willing to live and die here. To tell the truth, if I stay here much longer I shall die, willingly or not. I was very sick again this morning, I thought surely, I was going."

"Why don't you see the doctor about it?"

"I saw several of them, six months ago. They told me that the country was much better for me than the city, that I must drink plenty of milk and eat many eggs, and that my room should be well heated and well ventilated in the winter time. What's the use of hearing all that over again. You can't do any more than listen to it. And if you note carefully, you will find that it's the kind of advice that is given to consumptives."

"Oh, that advice holds good for a million different illnesses."

"Isn't it disgusting?" said Rolan. "We have more than thirty cows on the farm and we can't have a glass of milk a day."

"Don't you know why?" asked Miss Britter. "The Superintendent, who has none but himself and wife to look after, needs eighteen quarts of milk a day."

"What on earth do they do with eighteen quarts?"

"Take off the cream for their own use, and fatten their own little piggies on the rest."

"It's all a joke isn't it?" laughed Mr. Liton. "Thousands of dollars donated to reform boys goes to help a staff of officers to fat jobs. I have just tried to figure out the workings of this institution, and it is laughable to see what a farce it is. The best of everything for the officers and the poorest of everything for the boys, and the world cries about the thousands of dollars spent on reformation, unsuccessfully."

"Why not? The world gets its information from the superintendent's annual report, which tells how much is being done for these boys—how wonderfully ideal the institution is kept. Some philanthropists take the trouble to investigate. They herald their coming, and the place is fixed up for the occasion, boys are taken out of the "coops" and hospital, handcuffs are hidden, the officers forget their swearing and chewing of tobacco, or smoking against the rules, and the philanthropists find everything as represented in the annual report, and donate some more money;

then go back home and read statistics, which show that most of the boys come back to the institution time after time, and deduce, quite naturally that the boys are incorrigible—beyond redemption.”

“Oh, Mr. Liton,” went on Miss Britter, “I had a talk with Krammer to-day about a photography class.”

“What did he say?”

“The usual, ‘Oh, no, not now,’ etc., but I got the best of him. I argued so long to prove to him that it is a necessity and not a luxury that he promised that when Mr. Landor comes on Sunday to see the parade (Mr. Landor is one of the rich members of the Board of Directors) he would mention it to him, and if he was willing to make the donation, Krammer would call you to tell him why you think it is a good idea.”

“Good for you. I’ll prove it to him—most conclusively.”

Their path led them over quaint little rustic bridges and over a very high hill, and brought them back again to Hilldale when the street lights were being lit.

“When I’m out like this,” said Nida, “I feel fine.”

“Let’s go in here and have a good meal, and you’ll feel still finer.”

The proprietor, a middle-aged woman with well-curled hair and an exceptionally well painted and powdered face, was there, and in her endless number of trips from the cash box to the kitchen window, greeted them very often with extremely warm smiles.

The coffee sign looked as cheerful as ever, and the coffee it involuntarily praised tasted even better.

They ate a great deal and laughed as much.

"Poor Ernest," began Miss Britter suddenly, "we must get him out of the kitchen."

"Anybody that makes a single reference to the institution or the boys will have to pay a fine of ten cents," said Nida.

"Good idea. We'll all become maniacs if we keep on."

"And move into padded cells."

After going into details as to what each would say when they get to their particular padded cell, they started for home.

On their way home, Miss Britter began to relate an incident that had taken place that day in her office, and was immediately stopped and the ten cents was exacted in the dark and they had to light a match to see whether the coin she handed the self-appointed treasurer was a ten cent piece. This performance took place several times, and affected different members of the company, and they soon found themselves on an unknown road with two unoccupied houses visible. Not a living being was about to inquire of.

"I'm sure that this is the hill," said Miss Britter, pointing to one on the right. "Let's make for that."

It was a clear night, with very bright stars, and the atmosphere so calm that sounds of voices and of a barking dog came floating towards them from the distance.

When they reached the grounds the dormitory lights had long been put out, and the teachers having gone to the city for the week end, the place seemed deserted. With the exception of a light here and there in some cottage mother's room, and the moving lantern of the watchman, the institution was in darkness.

They retired to their own rooms, and almost simultaneously these were lit up, giving added life to the outdoor aspect of the hill. Then at ten o'clock the power house shut down upon them, and the darkness deepened. Candle lights soon made their ghostly appearance to wrangle with the night; but even the candle lights, one by one, yielded, and the night victorious, settled heavily upon the hill and the valleys on either side.

Mr. Liton smothered his candle and fell upon his bed, but found it hard to sleep. Several times he stole up to the window and peeped out over the endless stretch of shadow, upon the subdued Milky Way, or towards the lifeless dormitory opposite him.

The watchman started a heavy grinding walk to the other end of the hill, to begin another round. Mr. Liton listened to him, and stationed himself once more where he could look out and get the breeze upon his face.

"A boy is up and can't sleep," thought he, for he saw a white figure at the window of the dormitory, some two hundred feet before him.

"Fellow sufferer," he went on thinking, "I wish he could come over here and talk with me. I guess it's better for both of us, though, to return to bed."

But the white figure had more vital reasons for being unable to sleep than he, and had no intention

of returning to bed. The nervous head went way out beyond the window and looked from left to right; then, moved by a determined impulse, stepped upon the window sill, grabbed the rope he had made of his bed sheet, and quickly slid down. After a second and hurried look about, the white figure dashed away into the woods and was lost.

Mr. Liton was dazed for a moment. He fell back upon his bed and tried to think—to work his way out of a nightmare—and buried his head in his pillow. Before his closed eyes shivered the half naked figure of a child struggling through the terrors of a tragedy.

A sound of voices and the rush of heavy feet startled him again. There was a hurried call from one man to another. One of the watchmen had discovered the runaway's rope, the Colonel had been awakened, and hastily they were on the trail. The Colonel carried a rope, and the other a lantern, and they, too, dashed into the woods, for it was there that all boys took shelter.

Almost an hour later the Colonel returned with his rope unused, the watchman's lantern still burning, and himself weary and worn out. There were a few hasty admonitions hurled at the watchman, who took them quietly, and continued on his rounds. Colonel Reilly's heavy feet ground their way on the pebbles, thumped a number of times on cement steps, and the sound of a closing door left it a night to itself.

The little white figure was still white in Mr. Liton's restless brain, and he saw it run and stumble by turns. Coming from some distance, he could hear the excited barking of several dogs, and his heart



beat frightfully, and he could have cried, as if he, too, were a slave child in white, alone in the woods, attacked by all the childish horrors of the night.

Several times that night he returned to the window side and looked out, until the night began to fade, and almost imperceptibly, the dawn grew gray upon it.

An alarm clock went off. A cottage father rose from his bed, donned his bath robe, went up into the dormitory and shook a sleepy little man. The sleepy little man rubbed his eyes, jumped off his bed, quickly dressed, clattered down the wooden stairway, opened the door and emerged into the half darkness of the morning, with a horn under his arm; then turned up the lapel of his coat to keep the wind from going down his warm back; ran to the flag-pole and pulled out the morning call. Then followed a multitudinous clatter of little feet on the dormitory floors and the institution was fully awakened into the routine of another Saturday.

Mr. Liton dressed hurriedly and struck out for Mr. Rolan's cottage, and woke him up. The two then started for an early morning walk.

"Miss Britter and Miss Cane are going to the city to-day, are they not?" asked Mr. Liton, after they had walked several miles, and he had described, in detail, every incident that had taken place the night before.

"Yes, they are going to take the early train, too."

"Do you suppose they might want to see us about anything before they go?"

"I don't think so. They're coming back as soon as the courses they are taking at the university are over."

"Well, what do you say to our going on for the entire day?"

"I have no objections."

"I would like to climb up there," said Liton, pointing to the western hill with its monastery. "I want to see what sort of a building is under those towers that we always see against the sky."

"Oh, it's very beautiful. I have been there several times," answered Rolan. "It is an old monastery, I think."

"Rolan," began Mr. Liton, while they were making for the hill, "do you know, I wish I had a school of my own. I'm very much afraid that there isn't much to be hoped for here. It's bad from one end to the other—it's a farce, pure and simple. It is a make believe affair, stands for something that it is not at all, in any way."

"And the worst part of it," said Rolan, "is that most people think so highly of it. It is so clean and so beautiful in appearance that everybody thinks it is ideal. I have heard many people call it the best institution of its kind, and I have read that in the newspapers."

"Exactly! That is just why I think it is hopeless. You can reform boys, but you can't reform men so easily, and I suppose some men, because of some vices, are beyond redemption."

"Just exactly what I have often thought," cried Rolan, "to reform these boys, one would first have to reform the officers."

"And not only that, but you would first have to reform the world and society. How few people understand—how few have real sympathy or go down to the bottom of things. A few, moved by a kind of

sentimental sympathy that they have acquired from articles and books, rush into the work, fail, as they should, and come back to tell the rest of the world their experiences; and the world becomes discouraged, blames everything on human nature, and falls back a step or two in the struggle upward. Look at old man Krammer. I can't talk two words with him before he informs me that he has had twenty years of experience in the business. And let me tell you, the world respects his experience, regardless of how many leagues he may have traveled in the darkness. I don't think that man ever understood a single child in his life. He tells me his own boys are a disappointment to him—he could never make them do as he wanted them to, and he is at the head of a society that has in its control a multitude of children. The very fundamental principles of reformation are Greek to him.

“He has not learned in all his twenty years that you can neither *make* boys do what you think is right, nor beg them to do so. He can not see that every child is guided by a set of impressions that certain years, of a certain kind of experience, have made; that only by supplying the elements of a new and better environment that will make a boy *see* and *feel* that your notions are right and that his own are wrong, and that living up to yours he will be happier, is reformation possible. If living up to your notions he will not be happier, then there is something wrong with your notions, and the child should not be blamed. Society takes a boy that was led by an uncontrollable amount of energy, curiosity, hunger, and desire into a mode of living that made way for his surplus energy and satisfied his hunger and

desire; and ties him down to an institution where there is little or no outlet for most of his energy; where curiosity must be stifled, and hunger and desire go partially or entirely unsatisfied, and because of his failure with these methods, the superintendent pronounces the boy incorrigible, and the world thinks him a wise man who speaks from experience.

"Take the boy, for instance, who learned to steal or gamble, and with the amount he either stole or won found it possible to fly about on trolley cars, to ride on boats or go to amusement centers, where he could flirt with the girls; to moving picture shows, where they cater to all his potential sensuality and develop it; who finds in his vices a satisfaction for all the desires that his environment has created in him—imagine telling that boy about virtue. What represents virtue in his mind? The institution denies him all the pleasure he has had, immoral as they may have been; harnesses him up in a lot of meaningless rules; gives him half as much as he desires to eat, and makes him work at things he does not like to do. In short, hard as it may be to say it, for all his grandeur, his delight and his sensuality, he is forced into a cold, lifeless, enslaved, brutal environment, and told that that means virtue, and is then asked to be virtuous. Could anything be more painfully ridiculous? That is what is called reformation, and because his very soul rebels against it, because he will not submit to it, he is considered incorrigible, and is despised. And when his revolt expresses itself in crimes that affect us, we put him in irons and main and cripple him for life, and feel justified in doing so."

"But what will satisfy all those desires or developed sensuality? Surely you couldn't create such conditions here. Just a minute! I am asking this from the point of view of some of our friends at Abolt. I want to know how you would answer that—I feel what you say, but I don't think I could answer that question."

"If I thought that the satisfaction of his desires really constituted the highest form of pleasure, I should say yes—give him such a condition here, or, rather, let him alone where he is; but I know at heart that a certain number of things that I have experienced mean infinitely more pleasure and happiness to me and those about me, and I should set about to make him get my experience as unconsciously and unforced as I got mine. I can get much more pleasure from creating things. I can get much more pleasure from literature, from music, from the woods and the roads. I am confident that by making him experience my experiences he will wake up some day and find that he feels as I do, and will think that he himself has figured matters out and concluded that way. I should do away with the wretched slave rules; I would take him out of the soul-destroying military line and military march; I should give him all the freedom that I could possibly give him without his getting into trouble. I should show him that rule and law are merely an agreement between people for the good of all, and would allow him to be a party to all his contracts. I would teach him to make things, and let those things be the things that he wants to have and use; I would take him out into the woods and let him run and play until he is exhausted; I would let him

hear his street or moving picture music if he agrees to hear my kind with me, and I am confident that, my kind being the better, he will prefer my kind in time. The same is true of literature."

"I would show him that my kind of freedom, gotten by working at the kind of things I like to do, is infinitely better than his kind, where he makes so many other people unhappy, and is always afraid of the policeman. Surely it won't take him long to realize that. He would rather earn enough to make him happy than steal it for that purpose. The idea of making a twelve-hour-day plumber, mussing with filthy pipes and sewers, of a boy who has learned the meaning of freedom and pleasure. What millionaire will give up his automobile for a cramped position in a sewer hole in the ground?"

"Give him to me. Let me put him into a world that gives him the opportunity of exercising his energy and his ingenuity; let him taste the joy of making things, of being a somebody of ability and worth, and he will be reformed. No, reformed is a bad word. We, society, will then have atoned for our abuses upon his potentiality."

They had already climbed up the steep hill, and Liton stopped, almost breathless, and gazed.

Towards the left their path continued winding around large tree trunks and their extended roots, and leading to an old deserted monastery, whose dark, gloomy windows were stopped on one side by half broken shutters, and nailed up with unpainted pine boards on the other. Most of the building was covered with living red and yellow colored vine leaves, which obliterated the corners and sharp edges of the entire body of the building, but, unable to

reach the two towers above, took the semblance of a human figure in supplication.

Tall, massive, wooden columns struggled upward from their bases, hidden by overgrown ugly weeds; and, formed a porch, where a few old broken chairs could still be seen strewn upon its floor like wreckage on a sea, telling of ascetic monks who, weary with their own solitude, would sit and gaze down into the valley of the living.

They struggled through the weeds and vines, in the hope that some one window would open up and give them a chance to look into the interior that seemed to have been occupied by death so long.

"My, but I'd like to own this. What a capital reform school it would make."

"Kind of gloomy, isn't it?" suggested Rolan.

"It's gloomy now, but!—Give me a dozen boys and a month, and we will tear open these windows and doors, destroy these ugly weeds, and fill the place with life again. Think of flowers about this place, and little gravel walks."

"A coat of paint, and large windows in those towers."

"It would be great. Rolan, let's get it."

"All right; it's for sale. Have you the money?"

"No, I haven't—but we can get it."

"I will go with you any time you call me."

Reluctantly they left the place. Every inch of ground had been covered and examined, and every one of the adjacent small buildings was given a purpose. One would make a good manual-training shop, another a chicken house, and the third a better barn than it was. One excavation made a trifle larger, would make a good swimming pool in sum-

mer and a skating rink in winter. A grove towards the left would make a splendid athletic field. On their way down they opened the shutters on the windows in imagination, and conceived the large halls within—one large room was to be a music room, another a studio. One room was to be the play room—it had a large fireplace, and they could already see the flames within and the boys encircling it. The rest of the rooms were to be school rooms and sleeping rooms. The towers were to be turned into observatories, with inexpensive telescopes where boys could gaze at the stars and moon—could anything more exciting be offered to boys!

It was late in the afternoon when they reached Hilldale. They made for the restaurant and ordered a heavy meal, and by the time they reached the old house in the valley, on their way home, it was eight o'clock. The conversation stopped and each strained his ears to hear "Taps" send the boys to bed.

"There it goes," said Liton.

"You know, I don't think I shall ever forget that boy's "taps." So much feeling in it. How sweetly it is drawn out! How it rises in such a majestic crescendo, and finally dies away so softly—it moves *me*."

Half an hour later they were traveling the gravel walks from cottage to cottage, looking for Miss Britter and Miss Cane.

"They must be at Mr. Staver's cottage," said Mr. Rolan. "We used to go there every other night to listen to his phonograph. He has some very good records and is a very musical man himself."

Just where they were. The machine was on one of the long tables in the sitting room, and Mr. Staver

stood by, manipulating it. The two men walked in quietly, for a great prima donna was singing, and they took their seats, merely having motioned their greetings to Mr. Staver and his guests.

Miss Britter was seated in a rocker, with her eyes towards the unused fireplace, and Nida was stretched on one of the benches near her, in a sleeping position. On the tables lay heaps of books and scattered dominoes that the boys had just used.

"You should have come an hour earlier," said Miss Britter, when the prima donna had finished her performance.

"Why?"

"Mr. Staver's boys were all down here, and we played with them. They were delighted. We told them all kinds of stories, and Mr. Staver played the machine for them. You should have heard the warm good-night we got. Every one of the thirty-two boys had to be answered individually."

"I'm sorry you people were not with us. We saw some wonderful things to-day."

"What did you see?" asked Nida, sitting up.

"The old monastery," said Rolan.

"That may be wonderful—yes, I guess it is wonderful, but I think I have seen wonders as great."

"Oh, yes, quite possible. I was not thinking of the place as it is now—I thought of its potential wonders."

"Some more plans?"

"Exactly."

"What are they?"

Mr. Liton hesitated.

"He's going to turn it into an ideal reformatory," said Rolan.

"Give us jobs?"

"Certainly, couldn't make it go without you."

"Give me one, too?" asked Mr. Staver.

"If you bring that machine along."

"I go nowhere without it. It has come to me by way of consolation. I always wanted to be a great violinist when a boy, but I never had the opportunity to study much. I studied a few years and had to give it up. This takes the place of my poor unrealized longing. I can stand here and play anything I want."

"How's your wife?" asked Rolan, after a few minutes.

"She isn't any better. I'm afraid we'll have to leave this place."

Mr. Staver placed another record on the machine, a violin solo by one of the greatest players of the day; and the Spanish melodies, which he played, poured out of the wooden horn and filled the room with melancholy beauty. Mr. Staver stood in his place by the side of the machine, and smiled with emotion as each sweet little melody ended. Mr. Rolan folded his arms and stared out of the window. Mr. Liton clasped his hands and gazed on the portrait of Lincoln that looked down from over the fireplace. Miss Britter continued her gaze on the unburnt wood between the fire irons; while Nida, stretched upon her bench again, buried her face in her arms.

Number after number was played, and many received several encores, until suddenly, in the midst of Massenet's *Elegy*, the lights went out. Mr. Staver had a candle ready, for this happened at all his concerts, and in this flickering light the concert was concluded.

CHAPTER XII

REFUGEES

Michael Roate had run away, and a general excitement pervaded the atmosphere of the institution. Michael had been abused, and Mr. Krammer worried. Mr. Reilly had been admonished, and he in turn admonished the cottage father and almost got into a fight with him over it. The farmer was ordered to hitch up a horse and buggy and follow the refugee. Not only was the one boy gone, but after one boy escaped there followed a general desire to get away, and they expected a few others to attempt to follow him.

All day Saturday there had been continuous running about. Everybody seemed busy, but Michael was not found.

Sunday morning, it was understood, special visitors were to come. The dining room was to be decorated, the tables to receive new table cloths, the boys to receive and wear their new winter shoes, the cottages were to be made scrupulously clean from top to bottom, and the little fellows slaved at the work. The little prisoners were to be taken down from their coops and the handcuffs that had been hanging on to their limbs were to be hidden. The boys in the hospital were energetically encouraged to join their friends in their cottages, and to vacate the sick rooms.

Not a grown-up touched broom or mop or rag. Every window had a boy sitting upon it, whether on the first or third story, scrubbing with soap and

water and rag. Every set of stairways, every floor, and every bit of woodwork was scrubbed by wet chapped hands, and in the process some boys were kicked, some slapped, and all ordered about uncivilly. They grumbled, glanced sidewise, and hated.*

But when Sunday came every officer beamed in his new uniform, and the place in general sparkled. Everything seemed clean and new and happy, but the boys' faces; but visitors got to know that those faces were faces of moral degenerates, and were quite satisfied. "They will either change, or else—it can't be helped."

Miss Britter made sure that she was not far from the office during any part of the morning, for reasons of her own, and she informed Mr. Liton that it would be well if he remain in his room.

"You see," she said, "I know Mr. Landor well, and will make myself visible, so that he can give me his hearty hand-shake, and I can start a conversation on photography and can call you. If we leave it to Krammer, he will forget all about it a few times, you know."

And so it happened. Miss Britter, from her office window, saw Mr. Landor come upon the grounds in his automobile and whirl up to the school building. She made it her business to walk out just in time, and consequently met Mr. Landor, who had always taken a lively interest in her work. A conversation was started, and Mr. Liton was soon called for, who explained very enthusiastically the many possible effects of teaching photography.

*That this picture is strictly true will be recognized by all employees in reformatories.

"How much do you think it would take?" he finally wanted to know.

"I have figured that out very carefully," answered Mr. Liton, causing him to smile, "and I find that if I am to have instruments and materials enough to put a dozen boys to work at a time, I must have at least two hundred dollars."

"All right, Mr. Liton, you may have that. Mr. Krammer can order whatever you need and I will pay for it."

Mr. Landor then went into the office and told Mr. Krammer what he had promised to do, and found him very thankful indeed, but unable to withhold an expression of his feelings of surprise.

Many other important visitors soon arrived, and the school was surrounded by automobiles, big and little, the big ones representing the many-thousand-dollar philanthropists and the little ones the few-thousand-dollar ones; but all were equally interested, and when the bugle called, rushed out upon the lawn to watch *their* boys drill for *their* pleasure.

Nothing unusual transpired. The band played. From every cottage boys dressed in costly uniforms and carrying guns, poured into the main roadway, and marched towards the flag-pole. The Colonel was in his element, and his voice shook the very insitution, as it sang out over the hill and echoed in the valleys. Boys marched and drilled with heavy guns. Some thought it exciting and many worried over it. The visitors applauded, and marching was resumed. The visitors grew weary and re-entered the school building. The boys continued marching. Cottage One was at the extreme end of the walk and near the path Michael had taken two nights before.

They were ordered to halt, while every boy's attention was directed to where at a distance the Colonel stood and instructed. A foolish impulse possessed Dick Kennen, and he pinched Skinny Ludwig in the arm. Skinny understood what was wanted and the two sneaked away, right into the woods. Strange that the Colonel should have seen it. He ordered his battalion to face about, and half an hour later, when each cottage was on its way home he followed the trail to the woods. A cottage father went with him.

For over an hour they went on and retraced their steps by turns, and suddenly came upon them.

Dick thought that his escape had been undiscovered, and he congratulated himself hastily. They were standing very near to the woods, and surely the busy Colonel could not have seen them. The boys, he knew, would not "snitch" on them. But, as luck would have it, just when they were beginning to feel safer, Skinny tripped upon a vine and fell upon a very sharp stone that cut right through stocking and skin to the very bone. Dick could have cried, but "what good will cryin' do?" he figured out, and prevailed upon poor Skinny to cry as softly as he could, because "somebody might be after us." He half dragged and half carried him to some underbrush, where he attempted to treat the wound.

"Can you walk all right if I tie it up with this handkerchief?"

"Maybe."

Dick pulled out his handkerchief. It was not very clean and he was afraid to put it on the wound, for he had heard that you can get blood poisoning in that way. A multitude of thoughts came through

his mind. If Skinny got blood poisoned, they would both be caught, and Skinny might even die. Perhaps it would be better to go back where they could put something on his wound, or may be it would be better if Skinny crawled back and let him go on, for they'd surely beat him; they'd be afraid to hurt Skinny.

These thoughts he made known to Skinny, and poor Skinny, with a half sobbing voice, agreed with him. "They won't whip me for it, but they will whip you. I can crawl back; it isn't far. You run on quick."

Dick, with tears in his eyes, bade farewell to his companion, and made a dash into the woods. Then it came upon him, "What if some one found Skinny and hurt him—what if Skinny can't crawl back?" He would go back, help Skinny on till they came to a farmer. If they promised to work for the farmer, he would help them. And so he retraced his hasty steps and fell into the arms of the Colonel.

The Colonel selected a spot from where he could see the automobiles, and sat down with his captives to wait until those automobiles would drive away.

"Just wait till you get back," Colonel Reilly addressed himself to Dick. "You will get all you were looking for, and a good bit besides, take that from me. You will never do any runnin' any more. We'll fix you so you won't be able to stand or sit for a week—you will do no more runnin' away, remember that."

Dick was in terror. What shall he do? He might run now—he could run faster than the Colonel—and he could get under the small trees quicker than he. The opportunity came. The Colonel decided to

return where he might be wanted, and left his captives in charge of Mr. Saunders. Mr. Saunders was busy telling Skinny what might happen to him, and fixing his pipe for a smoke.

This was the only chance for his life, Dick knew, and, getting up quickly with the aid of his hands, he struck for the woods once more, and ran and crawled for dear life.

Mr. Saunders dropped his pipe on a stone and made after him. It was bad enough to run on the open path, but through the vines and underbrush it was almost impossible. Mr. Saunders puffed away after him under and against tree and shrub until finally he landed him, tripped in the meshes of a wild vine. Mr. Saunders was bruised on face and hands and out of breath, and like all animals in such a condition, his temper had the best of him. His large hand sunk down into the mass in the vine and closed tightly on Dick's neck, and pulled him up and out with increasing maddened strength. He beat and kicked and pulled, and poor Dick yelled and begged for mercy.

They returned to where Skinny sat and cried as if he, too, had been kicked and beaten. His wound did not pain him any more, and he was ready to limp home. Regretting the moment and the impulse that started Michael away, and then after him, they walked and limped back, sorry looking refugees, Dick crying and talking by turns, while Saunders held him tightly by the neck.

"You'll be sorry for this all right. Yes, you kicked me and I'll be sick, and if I die they'll hang you. I hope I do die," he sobbed, and rubbed his eyes.

It was no ordinary kick, one of the many that he received, and the pain that resulted from it grew heavier and more unbearable as they walked along, and his cries grew correspondingly louder, and before they reached the hospital Dick collapsed and was carried there and put into bed, howling with pain.

Skinny's wound was dressed. He was taken to the office, where Mr. Krammer administered the usual whippings given all who escape or try to. Mr. Krammer was alone in his office when the boy was brought in.

"A runaway, eh? Just leave him to me," said the superintendent, "we'll fix him up."

Skinny was stood up against the wall and the tears rolled down his sickly cheeks, over cheek bone and into the hollows and down again on his big and new uniform. "I won't do it again," he wailed, but the big man, used to those entreaties, sat at his desk, fixing some papers unmindful of him, till his sobbing subsided and, childlike, he had taken an interest in a large book of maps that lay open on the table, and forgot about his troubles.

"Now come here to me," said Mr. Krammer, in anger, when ready for him, and pulled out from one of the drawers a number of rattan sticks that he kept there for the purpose.

Skinny's pleadings increased in fervor.

"Stop that noise," cried Mr. Krammer, "and come here as I said."

He advanced trying to subdue his wailing, and the superintendent placed his hand upon the boy's shoulder. "Do you see these sticks?" he asked. "I use them specially for boys who run away. Now

stop that yelling, or it will be the worse for you. I am going to whip you now and whip you hard, and when I'm through I'm going to lock you up in a coop and tie you hand and foot with these cuffs for a whole week. After that time you will never try to run away again."

Both promise and prophecy were carried out, one by the hand of the superintendent and the other by a greater and less controllable force. Skinny's face when through with the operation was wet and dripping, and his smarting hands, one after the other, were stuck into his mouth for soothing purposes, and he himself was incarcerated, as was promised him, for a week.

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CHAPTER XIII

AN OFFICIAL RECTIFICATION OF AN UNOFFICIAL MISTAKE

There is a sadness in the change of seasons that is indescribable. A golden autumn steals to its end, and one day wakes gloomily. Dark gray clouds overhang the hills and sail through the valleys. Creatures bend their backs and stand staring away into the mysterious North, or sit within doors and gaze out upon the yellow grass and leafless trees.

Ordinary children run gleefully up the stairway to the attic, pull out of great heaps of clothes their winter garments, run out into the sunless outdoors and defy the wind, which blows and tugs at cap and ribbon, and goes off with the happy sounds of their laughter.

But children with the trials of men, broken and restrained by the will of others whom they hate, who look forward to cold days of scrubbing and cleaning with hands more chapped, put on the frowns and furrows of their elders, and figuratively sit, in their cottages, before windows and stare through the gray day, over fields of yellow grass and woods of leafless trees to a far away mysterious North, and dread the morrow. Some of them, old enough, look back upon a yesterday and regret.

This Monday was the monthly letter day that institution boys so eagerly look forward to, the day when they forget the things they are punished for, when they ignore all derisions for weakness, and write their letters home with a sentimentality that

wets the inky characters and spreads blots over the paper.

The wind blew strong and tore from their vines with an irresistible force the last red leaves from the brick walls, and sent them rolling on the gravel walk or through open windows.

Miss Britter sat in her office and worked over a new schedule, when one of the red leaves flew into the room and settled down upon the paper near her pen. She looked at it for a moment, then went to the window and looked out upon the death of Autumn.

The boys who went to school in the afternoon had to work in the morning, and those who went to school in the morning did their work in the afternoon. As she stood there fingering the string of the window-blind a small group of lads marched out of the dining room to the farm, and some of them looked in her direction and smiled. All of them pulled their caps down upon their necks, bent their backs and put their hands into their pockets. The farmer went somewhat behind, like a slave-driver following his victims. These passed before her like shadows on a screen, and she returned to her desk.

A small boy rushed into the office.

"Miss Britter, the new teacher wants you. The boys are very bad."

Miss Britter followed him and opened a door from where a noisy bedlam died suddenly into silence. Little sinners from every corner of the room rushed madly to their own seats, clasped their hands, and sat up stiff and quiet like little wooden statues.

Miss Britter stood up erect, stared at them, and softly closed the door behind her. The room looked like a battle field. Books were scattered all over the floor, and in one corner a large box of chalk had been emptied and almost powdered. Two windows had had to give way to flying ink-wells, and a small statue on the book case had had its nose broken off and had received a large spot of ink on its right cheek.

She ordered them to get busy at once, pick up every book, clean the floors and the walls and then return to their seats.

"They threw spitballs, and one of them hit me with a piece of chalk," cried the new teacher.

"Yes, I see that," Miss Britter answered softly, anxious to have her brace up rather than exhibit her weakness.

The room was cleaned, and every boy took his seat, clasped his hands, sat up stiff as before, and spread a very serious expression over his face. Even little Tony's big eyes were serious, and he rolled them around, turning occasionally towards other boys in the class to see how they took matters. His little legs, unable to reach the floor, sitting, as he did, in a very low seat, dangled so hard that they struck against a part of his seat, and the noise frightened him.

Miss Britter had them sit quietly in that position for about fifteen minutes, then, noting the strained expressions on each face, had them rise, go through a number of physical culture exercises, and return to the same position.

"Can you give me the names of the boys who started this, Miss Turner?"

"I don't expect to stay," she whispered, with four fingers against her mouth.

"I'm coming in again in a little while. Miss Turner, will you please point out to me then the boys who have not done what they should, and I'll tell them something they won't be very happy to hear."

"This is awful," she said to herself, as soon as she closed the door behind her. "What can I do with them? It is not their fault. Too many pupils for one teacher. She doesn't give them work enough, and she is very weak on the whole. The idea of her telling me, before all those children, that they hit her with a piece of chalk! She is afraid of them. How can she teach them?"

She opened the door of Room Four so carefully that Nida went on with her work for several moments before she was aware of Miss Britter's presence. Thirty-five older pupils sat in their seats fascinated by a story she was telling them in connection with a geography lesson. Miss Britter was delighted. "What a pleasure it is," she thought, "to come into a room where there is sympathy and respect between teacher and pupils." The boys realized in their rough way that Miss Cane was a friend of theirs, for she appreciated the difference between one mood and another and always acted appropriately. Miss Britter told what she knew on the subject, and the boys, being allowed to discuss matters and tell what they knew, felt that they were having a real good time.

She found Mr. Rolan admonishing a rather penitent looking class.

"The change of weather, Miss Britter, made quite a change in my boys. They were so gloomy they

found it necessary to talk, and since I refuse to go on with my work while anybody talks, I had to stop and tell them what I think about it."

"Why should they feel gloomy about the weather?" she asked, ignoring the jocular way in which he had said that, and spreading a general smile over the room. "I should think they'd be very happy to think of the coming of snow—snow balls and sledging."

At this the smaller boys rubbed their hands over their chests in a grunting "ah, ah," while the older boys shook their heads dubiously, and sneeringly looked out of the windows. Mr. Rolan whispered to Miss Britter, "I don't blame them much. I feel as though I should be much happier out doors just now, myself."

In Miss Greet's room there was trouble. The moment Miss Britter opened the door, Miss Greet, who had been yelling, turned her head and blurted her feelings right out. "I simply cannot go on to-day, Miss Britter. They are actually rioting. I cannot do anything. They're in rebellion. They won't do what I tell them to, but sit and giggle and carry on frightfully. They're not afraid of anybody."

At the same time they sobered up immediately upon the arrival of Miss Britter, who put oil upon the troubled waters by the remark, "Oh, well, Miss Greet, we all feel out of sorts to-day. It is a little gloomy—summer has gone, and now autumn is going. Of course, there is no excuse for disorder, and I'm sorry for the boys old enough to be in your class who haven't intelligence enough to behave themselves. I am quite sure, though, that they feel

out of sorts and will feel better if they don't let this gloomy day bother them."

"Don't you think, boys, that there is something very beautiful about a day like this, too?"

"Yes, ma'm," said one boy, "when you can go out doors, in the woods, and climb trees."

"Yes, that's true; that would make it better and more interesting. But I mean even when you have to be in a room where you can merely look out of the window and watch the change of color in the trees, see the last leaves torn off by the wind, and think of the years you have lived already—you're old enough to do that— and the years that are to come to you yet. Make plans of what you are going to do in those years. Think whether, when autumn or winter comes to you, when you've grown old, you will have had a good time of it, or whether without education, without a job, or without friends, you will have had to spend your days on a park bench, cold and hungry and miserable, like the many that we see to-day. And let me tell you, boys, every day that you fail to behave and go without getting all that you should out of your work, you are bringing yourselves so much nearer to that terrible bench. Don't think that by bad conduct you are harming anybody but yourselves. This is not mere talk either. Every time you act that way you are making stronger some bad habit, and before long your characters will become bad entirely, and the world is very mean to bad characters. The world is very unforgiving. The people with whom you will have to deal won't excuse you, as I do. They won't say, 'Oh, the poor fellow is out of sorts!' or, 'He had a bad time of it in his life,' or, 'He doesn't mean to be bad.' The

world will look at you sharply, and if you don't do just what is right, it will put you out, refuse to give you that job, and have no sympathy with you whatever.

"Then some day you will wake up and find that winter has come. You will look into the looking-glass or the reflection in a stream, and find that your hair has become gray. You will look back upon your life and see what a hardship it has been, and then look ahead and see no hope, see before you no home and no friends, except perhaps the possibility of a poor-house. Boys, think hard about this. I hope that not a single boy in this room or this school will ever have to feel like that. I know you won't if you will think about it, and make up your mind to study and work and play and be happy. You must think about it and say to yourselves, 'No, I am not going to be one of those poor old miserable men on the city park benches with torn and dirty clothes, and a swollen face, mistreated and disliked by everybody!' You may not agree with me; you may not be able to see that your bad conduct to-day may lead you into that kind of life, but if you don't see it now, and if you don't take my word for it, there will come a time when you will see it that way, but when it will be too late.

"Now, then, stop all that nonsense. I want to see every boy happy all the time, but I don't like to see any boy make a fool of himself at any time, and I have already told you why. Play as much as you can when it is time to play; but forget all that when you come to the class room. And, boys, *we will have to forget it*, that's all there is to it. We can not have such nonsense in the class room.

"As I look across the room I can see many faces of boys who want to study and want to work and make strong able men of themselves, and to guard them I must see that the fellow who wastes their time has got to stop doing so. You can do as you like about yourselves, because you are going to do the suffering for it; but you have no right whatever to bring that upon other people."

Miss Greet set them to work.

"There will be a meeting this afternoon, Miss Greet, in my office. Please come at ten after three, sharp."

Mr. Liton announced, in the afternoon, that they were to make the rough draught of the letters they were to send home for that month, and, as they always did, the boys hailed that with delight. The yellow scrap of paper was distributed, and every boy fell upon it. There was not a sound in the room, and Mr. Liton walked to the window and looked down into the gray green valley and upon the towers.

Above them, the heavy clouds flew over the hill and valley like great mysteriously peopled airships coming from the North and spread over the sky into an even dark gray tone; and the purple and green landscape turned into an indistinct blue. He watched the leaves carried from one resting place to another, dashed against other trees or buildings, or going on and on with little interruption.

The sky dropped a snowflake, and then another and another, and soon many more, until the atmosphere was one blowing, whirling confusion of wind and white flakes. A boy saw it and ran to the window. A dozen others, and before long the whole class followed him, and soon was arranged at the

windows gazing out upon the coming winter. They stood there for some minutes.

"It may be bad discipline, according to some people's notion," thought Mr. Liton, "but not to mine. I could not be dragged away from here; I shall let them stay."

Soon one fellow returned to his seat to continue his letter writing; then another; and one after the other they returned to their seats, with new inspiration.

The three o'clock bell rang, and the letters were hastily collected. Mr. Liton, with the rest of the teachers, went to Miss Britter's office as requested.

"I am going to say some pretty harsh things to-day," began Miss Britter, when all the teachers had taken their seats, "but you must not blame me for it. I have spoken to you about these very things so often, and they have been forgotten so often that I am forced to do something to impress them most lastingly upon you. Of course this does not apply to everybody.

"I refuse to have twenty boys a day sent by each of you to my office for misconduct. You reduce your own influence with them every time you send them to me. You make yourselves weak by doing so. Besides showing them that you can not handle them, I have so many of them in my office at one time that there is very little I can do. Time after time I have the same boys, and many times I can see at once that the teacher is at fault, and I dare not say so. If you sent them only when it was very seriously necessary, I would be able to do a great deal. I cannot and will not whip them, nor will I allow any one else in the school to do so. There are times

when it may be necessary with boys who have been trained to do nothing until the slap and the dig is administered; but in nine cases out of ten whipping is more useless than effective even then, for that boy has been hardened to that kind of treatment, and it means nothing to him.

"But worse than all, is the fact that half the time the boys you send me have done nothing that should have provoked your anger. Overlook as many things as you conscientiously can. Don't let a boy come to me saying, 'I was only laughing' or 'She thinks I did that for spite!' That's all nonsense. Overlook these things when you can, and settle them yourselves when you can not.

"I have come into class rooms and found teachers admitting loudly before the class that 'I can't do anything with them; they throw this, that and the other thing,' and so forth, and so forth! Now, really, can you imagine anything more foolish? How do you ever expect to get the respect of your boys when you make yourselves so weak before them? If you must say that, say it to me, when they do not hear it. On the other hand, why say it at all? *Some* teachers can handle them very well. If you can't, and do not hope to acquire the ability, you ought to send in your resignation. This may seem hard, but if we are to consider the welfare of the boys—and we have no right to consider anybody else's welfare at this institution—it is not a matter of whether it is harsh or not. It is just so.

"If we have any desire to make ourselves experts in this work, we must train ourselves as well as the boys. If we have no such desires, then it is high time we get out and let others come in who are either

capable to do the right thing at once or who are willing to try to learn."

"If they were afraid to go to the office," said Miss Brand all flushed and excited, "they would not have to go so often."

"Not so long as I am principal here, Miss Brand, will any boy be afraid to come to this office. I am not here to fill them with fear, nor is any one else. If you send them for the most trifling reasons, and I find it against my principles to censure and make more miserable a boy who has already had too much of the world's misery, he will, consequently, begin to enjoy coming here. He will also be losing respect for you, who can not attend to him yourselves, or who delight in picking a quarrel with him over every little thing. If I punished him, I should do so for your wrong-doing."

"The trouble in this matter," said Mr. Liton, when asked to discuss the question, "is that many of us come here with the experience that we got in the ordinary public schools and try to work our pedagogical principles upon these boys, who are rebels of that very public school. The public school in the city has tried to educate the boys now in our charge, and has flatly failed. Its 'sissy' ideas of behavior, which means putting your limbs into an imaginary vice, that has gotten the boy to first rebel against it, then to escape it by truancy, and finally to substitute for it the street with all its vices. The boy has landed here. You can't hope to reform him by demanding the discipline he fled from. I never tell my boys to sit up or to pay attention. I let them stand on their heads if they desire to do so, but aim to make my instruction interesting, and an oppor-

tunity for all kinds of activity at the same time. A boy scrawls all over his desk trying to listen to what I say, because he is interested. Instead of telling him to sit up, I walk to the other end of the room, and he changes his position, or I call on him to get something for me, and so on. One thing must be done—the session must be made one period of active interest. As soon as I fail to attract the boy's attention it is wasting time to go on.

"A boy brings bread into the school room and eats it in his back seat. If he can do so without attracting the attention of the other boys, why not let him do it? Since he eats it, he must want it—and, very often, needs it. If other boys do see him, and it does interfere with attention, then, if possible, joke about it, let them all laugh over it, and then get right at your lesson again with a doubly interesting question.

"I have taught for six years in the public schools and never sent a single child to the office after the first year. My first year's experience proved to me that it is working against myself to do so. Why shouldn't I settle my own affairs? I am conceited enough to feel that Miss Britter can't settle my affairs with my boys as well as I can do so myself; besides, there are so many other ways in which Miss Britter can help me along, why should I waste her valuable time? Of course, there are rare occasions, but they are rare, very rare, or at least they ought to be very rare. I want to say, on the other hand, that the conditions here, as in many other schools are rank. A teacher can not successfully teach thirty-five angels, much less thirty-five spirited boys at one time."

"That's just it," said Miss Greet, and Miss Brand, by nodding, showed that those were her sentiments. "It is ridiculous to have so many of these boys in one class room."

"While I agree with you that ten or even twenty would make a large enough class, or even that with more than that number ideal teaching is impossible. Still I hold that the amount of trouble that we have is far in excess of what is unavoidable."

"As to making classes smaller, there is really no use talking about it. I have been fighting with Mr. Krammer over this for more than a year. Not only does he refuse to listen to any plan for such a thing, but he has deliberately asked me a few days ago whether I couldn't condense the number of classes and dispense with another teacher. So that, as you see, is out of the question."

"If we received a half-way decent salary," said Nida, "we might take up more courses at the university and improve our teaching ability. I think that would go very far in eradicating some of the evil results of our ignorance."

"The larger salary you speak of," said Mr. Rolan, "would especially be useful in providing meals for us so that we shouldn't all be dyspeptic old cranks. We'd get along better with the boys if we weren't."

"I want to add," began Miss Britter, again, "that, on the whole, the spirit of the school is a thousand times better that it was a year ago, and now, with all the wonderful things we are launching, there is no telling how very much better still the school will be in the future. In spite of all the disadvantages, we are on the road to great success. I'm sure that

in a short time, if we keep on and do our level best in every direction, this will become a school of fame, for there are more earnest people here than at any of the many institutions of its kind that I have visited, if I have the right to judge. I have said nothing with the intention of hurting anybody's feelings. I have merely tried to impress you with the importance of tolerance. I am not trying to reduce my work. I am trying to make my work more valuable to you. Why should I waste my time trying to get a boy to stop laughing when I might spend that same time getting interesting subject matter for you—getting newer and better methods and helping you make your work more interesting and efficient? Don't forget, too, that my real purpose in asking you to take care of your own troubles is to strengthen you in their eyes."

The discussion was continued for more than an hour, and everybody having been given the opportunity to express himself or herself, the spirit of friendliness increased many degrees, and each one left with a determination to try harder next day.

"Mr. Liton," said the principal, when most of the teachers had gone, "the boys from Mr. Saunders' cottage, who are very much abused, are very bad at school. They have been giving us considerable trouble ever since he has been in that cottage. Whether he ridicules the teachers before them, as he does before his friends, or not, I am uncertain. I know that they are very bad and impudent. I would like to go there and find out, but you see I would have no excuse for doing so."

"You want me to go there?"

"Yes, I would like to have you go there and call a meeting, and see what you can do with them."

"All right, I will do that after supper. Let's go for a walk now."

They went to the farm again, where they found Miss Brand and Miss Greet, and all gathered for a good time.

After a long search they found a single tree, on which a few red apples still hung. These they picked and divided.

"Look here," cried Miss Greet, who had jumped a stone fence about the orchard.

Everybody followed her to the other side. There, against the wall, lay heaps of large apples that had not been picked and for sheer laziness had been left to rot, while boys in their cottages were driven to stealing for want of them.

"That farmer knows very little about apple trees," said Miss Brand.

"Would that his ignorance extended no farther," lamented Miss Cane.

They went away down into the valley and explored all the musty old corners of the deserted house, and returned for supper.

"Will you please send all the boys of Mr. Saunders' cottage home to-night?" asked Mr. Liton of the Colonel after supper.

"Another meeting to-night?"

"Yes, a special meeting."

"I can't send them all back right now, but they can all be there by six o'clock."

"That will do."

Mr. Liton was glad to find on arriving at Mr. Saunders' cottage that evening, that the cottage fath-

er and mother had gone to the city, it being their day off. There was a faint light in the small hallway, but the sitting room was in darkness. The boys were all in the playroom in the basement, and the tumult coming from that end of the cottage was deafening. He rang the bell a few times, but received no reply, the tumult increasing in volume as he waited. He decided to go below through the rear.

Through the dust that filled the cement-floored room he could see one of the watchmen, a beastly looking individual, with a boy's bat in his hands, administering punishment for noise and creating bedlam.

"This is the worst I have seen here yet," thought Mr. Liton, as he saw the bat come down upon a little fellow with one shoe and stocking off, and he heard the awful crying that resulted. "That man isn't fit to be put in charge of a herd of oxen."

He made his way in and attempted to get silence. The obliging watchman then determined to hasten the coming of silence with his bat and a horrifying, "at—ten—shun!"

Every time the bat came down, a yell followed, like lightning and thunder, and in response to his peculiarly accented call for attention there was a burst of laughter. Bony-faced youngsters with sores on their eyes or foreheads ceased the wailing and started the laughter as often as he changed from the one to the other of his attempts to get order.

Mr. Liton then interfered and after a strenuous attempt the room was silenced, and as he looked upon that wretched crowd he was on the verge of giving up. "So much misery," he thought, "I'm

afraid there is no room for anything else."

"We are going to hold a special meeting to-night," he finally informed them. "Please get into line and let's go up-stairs."

"Thank you, Mr. Liton! thank you, Mr. Liton!" came from the entire line, and Mr. Liton knew that the thanks were offered not so much for the meeting as for the relief, however brief, from this insane individual.

They were asked to take seats in the sitting-room, and Mr. Liton sat at his little table looking at them and unable to speak for fully three minutes, and they, with their wet eyes and habitually frowning foreheads, wondered whether he was angry.

"Boys, I came to make arrangements with you for holding your meetings and to help you to start upon the work that you are to do, but I can hardly go on."

"It's not our fault," said one of the boys, a thin lanky fellow, "that watchman's crazy."

"Well, if I had just come in here for the first time, and had seen what I saw to-night, I would agree with you. Yes, it was his fault, he is very funny."

"But it just happens that I was told to-day, and I hope you have a good explanation for this, that this cottage is the worst cottage in Abolt School."

"Because," said Ernest, the unappreciated genius, "we have a succession of such watchmen; cottage father Saunders and the watchman are alike in their insanity."

There was the precocious Ernest delivering himself of the truth, and Mr. Liton was lost as to what to say.

"This isn't the only night of its kind," he went on, taking advantage of Mr. Liton's inability to speak. "We have that bat performance every night."*

"We try to be decent," pitched in another, "but they won't let us do anything here. They won't let us have any meetings. I am secretary of this cottage. He took my books away and my pencil and gave me a licking."

This provoked a fit of laughter on the part of a few of them; the rest, like Mr. Liton, did not feel in the mood.

"There is no use talking," went on Ernest, "we won't have any meetings here. He won't let us have them. We might as well give up. He laughs at them and says we act like fools, and that we're not fit for meetings, making of himself both judge and jailer."

"Yesterday he heard us talking about the magazine," put in Tifton, a tall, bright looking boy, one of the brightest in Mr. Liton's High School class, "and began to make fun of it. 'You needn't worry,' said he, 'Mr. Liton is only foolin' you. He'll take all the stuff you write and throw it into the waste-paper basket.' "

"He said that to you?" asked Mr. Liton, his face expressing the rage within him.

"Yes, sir," and half the other boys helped him by many additional "Yes, sirs" and "I heard 'im."

"Well, boys, I can not say any more to you than

*This picture like almost every other one in this book is a description of what actually took place and what in reality was much more brutal than it can be made to appear in words.

that I am going to try to help you. I will speak to Mr. Krammer to-morrow about it, but you must promise to do your best in the meantime. I want Miss Britter to tell me next week that your cottage was the best in behavior and not the worst. Do you think that is possible?"

There was a subdued "Yes, sir," in reply, but a dubious expression spread over each face from the bony, disgusting ones to the few bright, healthy ones. They were ready to do what was right, but as Tifton then expressed himself, "You haven't been here long yet, Mr. Liton. Wait till you're here a little longer; you'll find out a few things. Not many people think as you do about it, and the rest of 'em are all against you. You'll find that out. We've tried to have clubs many times, but they don't want them to be successful, and you'll find out why."

Mr. Liton told them a story of his own experience, told them of a trip he had taken across the ocean, described in detail the hardship of the sailors, and then gave them a picture of Liverpool—the smoky atmosphere, the gloomy parks, with their men out of work, asleep on the benches. He told them of the little boys and girls, with sores all over them, and who, dressed in rags, went about the streets begging or selling matches. Then he took them to London, about one of the London bridges, and let them see and feel, as only they with their experience could see and feel, the life in the slums there. In that way he gave them a real picture of what living in the underworld meant, and then showed them that by studying, becoming educated or learning one or more trades, they could keep themselves above that underworld.

Then he started upon a different course. He told of some of the great men in the world who struggled against the forces that pull people down, and rose to usefulness and happiness. He described with such vividness every step he knew in the life of Owen Kildare that every boy felt that that was a description at least in part of his own life, and hoped that he might reach some distance in the height Kildare had climbed. Then he laid his plans before them. He was going to teach photography, which was not only fascinating, but one could earn his living with a knowledge of it. Some of the boys, by writing for the magazine, could learn to be writers, that in the magazine they would have drawings as well, and that those who have ability would be given a chance to learn to be illustrators. That, later on, when the things he was starting now would be running smoothly, he would give the boys a chance to study many other things, that he had friends who would come and teach them.

"Then, too," he went on, "when you show Mr. Krammer that you love your republic and obey the laws that you make, and get along well in school, he will let us go out into the woods and camp and take pictures, and so on."

Some of the boys joined in the enumerating of the many things that could be done in the woods, on the farm, and it was this response that assured Mr. Liton that he had succeeded in doing what he had set out to do, and he hesitated in leaving them to the watchman.

"Perhaps," thought he, "if I could keep them for the rest of the evening, and send that watchman away, I will have made some kind of a lasting im-

pression upon them."

"Shall I stay with you for the rest of the evening?" he asked them.

The reply is impossible to describe, for it came by way of facial expressions and excitement as well as words. From the few who answered enthusiastically "Yes," it rose to those who gathered about him and pleaded and begged.

"All right, then," said he, "I'll stay. I'll go down stairs and tell the watchman that he can go on, but you must be quiet while I'm gone."

Below he found the watchman dozing on a bench in one corner of the basement play ground. "I'm going to take care of these boys for the rest of the evening, if you don't mind."

"Put them to bed and all?"

"Yes."

"All right, thank you, thank you. Take 'em, take 'em, I'll go and get a little snooze." With this he left.

Mr. Liton walked into the engine room, gathered some wood and paper, helped himself to a small box of matches that lay on a shelf there, and walked up stairs. Without saying a word to the happy youngsters, laughing and talking rapidly, he walked up to the fireplace, put the paper and small pieces of wood under the two logs that lay there, and set a match to it.

"There'll be a row, to-morrow," said Tifton as he watched it.

"Why?" asked Mr. Liton.

"Because they never do that, and they'll have to replace the logs so it looks nice should visitors come."

"But this wasn't built for visitors. This is exactly what it's for."

Snaky tongues of flame were soon struggling from paper and wood into the throat of the fireplace, and the boys stood about and gazed at them. All the lights in the room but one in the farthest corner were put out, and the chairs were replaced about the two tables. Mr. Liton invited them to sit down upon the rug with him, and, with their arms embracing their knees, they watched the lights and shadows as they danced and interchanged.

The boys fought with each other as to who was to sit nearest to him, until he began the story he promised to tell them, when they huddled together as best they could and drank in every word, staring into the fiery center of the fireplace.

One of the boys who could sing very well himself, suggested that they sing. "Home, Sweet Home," received the largest number of votes, and not alone because of its familiarity, and was started.

"But we must sing very, very softly, almost a whisper," said Mr. Liton, and the soft, rather inharmonious music that followed, with the smoke from the burning log, passed out through the chimney and rose high into the heavens.

From the singing of "Home, Sweet Home," they went into a discussion of what it means to have a home and be away from it, and not to have a home at all, and Mr. Liton was one of them and talked to them as equals.

Then they began to sing again, and while they were singing the door softly opened and Miss Britter with Mr. Rolan and Miss Cane entered, unheard.

Mr. Rolan walked up on his toes, and touched Mr. Liton on the shoulder.

"Hello!"

A whole shower of "Hellos" followed, and the visitors had to answer each one of them.

"Do you know that the first bugle will blow in another minute?" asked Rolan.

Mr. Liton hastily pulled out his watch, and the boys were alarmed, and all jumped to their feet.

"Somebody'll be kickin', Mr. Liton," said the cadet. "We must hurry down or there'll surely be trouble."

"Oh, don't worry, I'll be responsible for whatever happens. Let's go down though and be as quick as possible."

They went below and washed, put their shoes away, made the gruesome semi-circle, bent their heads, said their prayers and were soon making their way up again.

The three visitors stood in the hallway as they passed up and returned to each a sincere "Good night."

Within a few minutes every boy had put his clothes into the locker and was in his little bed, and just as Mr. Liton was locking the last of the two dormitory doors, after having turned out the lights and bid them all good night, they heard the lovely sound of "Taps."

In the sitting room, Mr. Liton found his friends seated, as the boys had been, about the fireplace, and joined them. They talked away about Abolt School, pupils and officers until the light from the fire went down and only a few living embers were left. Then every bit of ashes was scrupulously cleaned up and

the floor about the fireplace was wiped clean with a rag.

Miss Britter and Miss Cane retired, and Mr. Rolan, who lived in that cottage, invited Mr. Liton to bring the letters he had to correct that night to his room, where they could work and guard the cottage at the same time.

Mr. Liton went for his letters and when he returned comfortably seated himself on Rolan's bed, and with a board on his lap, went to work.

Mr. Liton's eyes filled with tears as he read the first letter.

"My dear Uncle:

"It snowed to-day for the first time, and winter will soon be here. All the yellow leaves that looked like gold all autumn are soon going to be covered up with the white snow, and lay that way all winter, till summer comes again; then they will be all rotten and very brown.

"I am very happy to see the seasons go, for soon I'll be a man and will be free. I am not very happy here and am always thinking of home, and how sad everything turned out. I feel very bad because you didn't come to visit me, it seems to me that you have not yet forgiven me, though you say you have. I know I have disgraced your family after you have done so much for me, but I can only say that maybe some day I will be able to have my revenge upon some of the people I know, by showing them that they are mistaken too, about me.

"If you don't care to come to see me, let Willie come. It will make me feel so good, or does he feel the same way as you do about me?

"Please let him and Annie, too, come if they want to.

Your Nephew,
GEORGE."

The second letter was as significant as the first, and although Mr. Liton had thought that his sympathy up to this time had been as deep as it could have been, he felt a deeper sympathy towards these unfortunate boys now than ever. His heart went out for them.

"My dear Mother:

"It is now over a year since I was taken away here, and as I see the snowflakes falling I begin to think about you and Charlie and Rhoda, and about myself. Why I am here.

"Mamma, I am sorry to tell you that I have not been as good as I promised you last time I would be, and have gotten another report, and will have to stay here three weeks longer, but it is not entirely my fault. I have a streak of badness in me and, mother, I am struggling very hard with this badness, and I hope to get it out of me. I want to grow up a good man and go out and earn money and help you and the children. It is not all my fault why I got that report. I will tell you why when you come to visit me again.

"Things are nicer here than they ever were before, and I hope that from now on I will not have to get any more reports. I have a new teacher and he is the best man we ever had here, that's what all the boys say. He started a republic and a council that will help us out and try to show those people when they want to give us reports that we did not mean to be bad, and I think most always we won't get our report if we behave ourselves after that. He

is going to have a magazine for us, too, and I am working very hard to write something for the first number. I am surely going to have something in it for I have tried very, very hard and have written two stories and a poem, and one little thing about our school and one about autumn and winter. He is also going to have a photography class, and every boy that behaves himself will be able to learn photography, and I am going to behave myself every minute. I want to learn photography and in that way make some money when I get out and help you. It's nice to know anyway, isn't it?

"Now please tell Charlie and Rhoda to write to me. I wait all night, the night before the letters can come to us, and can't sleep thinking that tomorrow I'll get some letters. Please write. All the boys in my cottage get letters but I. With love to all, I am,

Your son,

BENEDICT."

"P. S. Please bring me a white sweater next time if you can spare the money, but if you haven't it never mind."

Mr. Rolan sat on the other end of his bed, his head resting on his left hand, while Mr. Liton read the letters he considered interesting to both.

"Look for Ernest's letter," said Rolan. "Miss Britter always reads his letters to us; they are great."

Mr. Liton searched among the bundle of yellow letters until he came upon it, then read.

"My dear Mother:

Another season is dead, and still I am here, and I sometimes wonder how many more seasons will die before I can be with you again. I am feeling unusually blue to-day, so don't worry if my letter is very, very bad. The hill we looked at

together, with its towers in the air, is now wrapped in a blinding whirl of snow and leaves, so that everything is obliterated, till it looks as if this were a northern desert, with the air as barren as the sand. Oh, mother, if you can ever realize how within my heart I repent, you will forgive me for the shame I have brought upon you. I feel as though I have been tied to a stone in that desert, and have buried my head in the sand. There are few people I can talk to here. With the exception of my new teacher and Miss Britter and one or two others, there is not a soul that understands me or with whom I can enjoy a conversation. I am fortunate though in having that new teacher and look forward to a winter more interesting than the last. He is really interested in the boys and wants to help them. He is trying to start many lovely things, and if they don't interfere with him, we will be a happy set of boys. Among the many things he is trying to do is the publishing of a magazine, and there is some talk of my being made the editor of it—you know I should like nothing better.

"I had some trouble with the wretched Mr. Saunders. He is the most ignorant man I ever met, especially when he gets drunk or smokes against the rules. Rules were only meant for us to keep. The other day he was a little tipsy, I think, and when he came into the sitting room I was reading a book in a corner, while a few fellows were making a lot of noise; he started to plot against me. He said that I jumped all around the room till I heard him coming and then sat down. It made me very angry and I tried to tell him that he was mistaken, but he wouldn't listen to me and said he saw me do it. Now, mother, I know in my heart that I was sitting right in that corner reading. Well, I lost my temper and told him that he was a liar. He hit me with his fist, but that's all right now, he didn't hurt me much ;

but he and the Colonel, who hates me, too, punish me by putting me into the kitchen scrubbing floors. They wanted me to apologize to him.

"I will tell you more about everything when you come. Don't speak to anybody about this when you come. They don't know any better and it will only make it worse.

"My love to all of you. With the hope that I will soon be able to return to civilization, I am your boy,

ERNEST."

"They'll never let that through," said Rolan.

"Does anybody else look through these letters besides Miss Britter?"

"Oh, yes. They're looked over in the office after Miss Britter examines them."

"Well, then," said Liton, "I won't let it go to the office at all. I'll ask him to write another to-morrow."

A noise in the hallway brought both of them to their feet, but it was only the cottage father, who was returning late and tipsy, followed by the cottage mother in but slightly better condition. His foot caught in a small rug and tripped him. His wife helped him up again as best she could, and the two walked into their room, the cottage father swearing and grumbling.

Relieved from his vigil, Mr. Liton returned to his own room and went to bed.

Next morning he was up with the bugle call, and continued correcting his letters, till all were finished. He then started for his class room, having no desire whatever to enter the dining room. Miss Britter was already in her office and apparently upset.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"Yes, there are a number of things wrong."

"What's the trouble?"

"To begin with Nida is quite sick. Her lungs are in a very bad condition. I will have to see that she leaves as soon as possible. The conditions here have cost her her health. I wish I could send her to Colorado. I'm thinking I ought to go with her, I'm not feeling very well myself."

Mr. Liton stood there silently and stared out into the winter-threatening outdoors. A winter indeed seemed to have suddenly come down upon matters.

"Miss Turner left yesterday," went on Miss Britter, "and her boys too, are to be taken care of. Think of it. I have a friend who would be an ideal teacher for that class, a girl with experience and love for the work. She is willing to give up her position and come here, a distance of about a thousand miles. I know her and have worked with her for years. She would be an inspiration here, but he won't have her because she is my friend. He is suspicious—and ignorant. 'Too many of these good people here already.' He'd rather have his thirty-five dollar agency teachers, that no one else will have, and rule supreme."

"He won't have your friend?"

"No, he'll go to the city to-morrow and get a teacher; but she will be the fifth teacher for that class in the last three months, and I simply will not stand for incompetents any longer. These boys should have the best teachers and not the worst."

The large hall door was heard to open and the superintendent walked into the hallway, and made for Miss Britter's office. His face was pale and his eyes flashed fire.

"You will please call a special meeting this afternoon," he said nervously after a very cold "good morning;" then turned about and went to his own office.

"Something is up."

"Looks like it," said Miss Britter, "but you can't tell. He may be all smiles by the time the meeting is held."

But he didn't look much pleasanter that afternoon when he stood on the platform buttoning and unbuttoning his neatly pressed Prince Albert. The cottage parents were all there, beaming as if about to gain a great victory. Mr. Liton, quite weary, stood near Mr. Rolan in one corner. At the opposite end of the room stood Miss Britter, worn out after a day of teaching two classes and the usual principal's duties, thinking of her trunk, a long distance of railroad, and the boys she would leave behind her.

The superintendent began to speak, "Boys, in creating your republic you have made a great error, a great mistake, and that's what I've gathered you this afternoon to rectify. You have gotten the wrong notion that you, through your council, are to take away and give all reports. I want you to remember that there is only one source for the giving and taking of reports, and that is right here." And the superintendent, with overwhelming dignity, pounded an index finger upon his august breast. "No one can give or take away reports outside of my office. Mr. Liton is a new man here, and though I am sure he meant well, it was a mistake."

"I beg your pardon," cried Mr. Liton across the room, filled with anger, "but I think you are mistaken, Mr. Krammer, and I am going to ask you,

since you have mentioned my name, to allow me to explain to you my real position in the matter."

Being unable to do anything else, this having come rather unexpectedly, Mr. Krammer granted him the permission.

"I want to say first for the boys," began Mr. Liton, "that there is not a single boy here that has had any such a notion. I took special care in explaining over and over again that we, the council, had no such idea in our heads. What we meant, and what we made clear, was that we should try to influence the boys so that they would have to get no reports. That is, that if a teacher or parent wanted to report a boy, if they were willing to, they should give the boy's name to the council and withhold his report until the council proved to be unable to make that boy behave himself, but if the council did get the boy to behave himself, then the report should be erased entirely. I had it strictly understood that that applies only to those teachers and parents who were in sympathy with the republic and were anxious to help us along. That those teachers or parents who did not sympathize with our work need have nothing to do with it, and can go on and give reports to their hearts content.

"If any boy as much as intimated that he thought we were going to give and take away reports to or from any boy, I would like to have that boy get up right here in front of the rest of the boys who are being scolded, and tell Mr. Krammer how he got that notion."

"Well," began the superintendent again, "wherever the mistake arose, Mr. Liton, this meeting is simply called to rectify it, and if every boy goes

away from here knowing just how matters stand, we have nothing more to bother or worry about."

There was a moment of silence, and Mr. Krammer realized that he had made a great fuss over a little thing that could have been explained without that fuss, and to make it appear that this was but a minor part of the programme, pulled out a little book from his pocket, looked at the title page, closed the book and dropping the hand with which he held it to his side, stroked his beard with his other hand and addressed the boys once more.

"I am going to read to you a little book that I have read to you frequently. It is, in a way, another Bible to me. I have spoken about it to you many times. Who knows what it is?"

A number of hands went up, and one boy was called upon.

"A Message to—," here the boy stopped, he had forgotten.

"That's right," said Mr. Krammer, coming to his assistance, "A Message to Garcia, by Elbert Hubbard. I am going to read it to you again, and perhaps many more times. I want you to make it your Bible in a way. I want you to fix those truths in your minds so that you grow up and be successful men, men that the world wants, men that can always get a job—desirable citizens."

He read.

Ten minutes of reading and the boys grew restless. One little fellow talked incessantly. The Colonel walked over towards him on tiptoes, and not wishing to make his punishment audible, grabbed his ear and pinched it, digging his finger into the lobe. The little fellow shrugged his shoulders and tried

to keep himself from screaming, but this seemed only to invite the Colonel to dig deeper, until the little fellow, unable to bear it any longer, shrieked and interrupted the reading. Colonel Reilly then made him rise and took him outside, and Mr. Krammer, who had stopped to stare indignantly at the offender, continued his reading.

The restlessness continued and increased as the pages turned over. Finally, when the boys were actually getting noisy with the stretching of hands and feet, the thing ended, and every boy sat up again to hear Mr. Krammer's renewed praise of the great work.

The meeting was about to adjourn. Mr. Liton once more interrupted proceedings. "Just one moment, Mr. Krammer. You said that at the next meeting you would have the boys vote on whether they would be willing to give their good behavior money for the support of the magazine."

"Yes, I'm glad you reminded me."

Mr. Krammer explained the whole matter to the boys and ended by saying, "Those of you who are willing to give your ten cents a month whenever you earn it by good behavior for the publication of a magazine, raise your right hand."

Every single boy in the room put up his right hand, and Mr. Krammer with a nod of his head to Mr. Liton, left the platform, but before he reached the door a loud applause broke out that nearly put an end to magazine and republic. The superintendent left the room. The boys went wild, the applause grew louder, and finally brought with it thumping on the floor and whistling. It sounded like a riot.

Colonel Reilly was enraged. He stamped his foot and yelled, "Attention," till he grew red in the face. When they finally did quiet down, he promised them that they would have no playing that day, and that the time they had after supper would be spent in standing on line in the school hallway.

All the letters had already been corrected and rewritten, and Miss Britter was to go through them, finally, after supper, so that they could be sent into the office next day. Mr. Rolan and Mr. Liton promised to help her.

Immediately after supper they all went to visit Nida, whom they found in bed, quite weary. They told her all about the meeting and Nida claimed that that was medicine to her, and that if they would come again and tell of another such a victory she would become entirely well.

"Come in again after you have looked over the letters, will you?" asked Nida in a pleading tone.

"Are you very anxious to have your cottage father come in again to tell you that you are making too much noise?"

"Don't you care about that. We have no other place to gather in but our rooms, and they can't stop us from doing that until they provide another place. You come to-night anyway, and you can make some chocolate. I am sick to-night, so they won't care anyway."

They returned to the office, and were working away on one letter at a time, with over three hundred of them spread on the table, when the heart-sickening "thud, thud," of a long line of boys moved into the hallway. The Colonel and several officers and cadets came along on each side and command-

ed threateningly, "Hip, hip—hip, hip, etc." When the first boy had reached the extreme end of the hall and the last had entered the opposite door, they were commanded to halt and then to turn about with their backs on the open door of Miss Britter's office. There they were to stand for an hour. The Colonel and officers brought chairs out from the different class rooms and sat down.

When the hour was over and they had thrown the weight of their bodies from one foot to the other an innumerable number of times, they were sent to their cottages.*

"Did you see them try to look in here?"

"Yes, it just breaks my heart. They become worse every day with that treatment. And why shouldn't they?"

"I certainly would become ungovernable," said Liton, "if I were treated in that way."

"They are not angels, mind you. I know that some of them can do pretty mean things; but I also know that they are capable of doing the right thing when given half a chance."

The conversation was interrupted by another swing of the doors, and the Colonel's voice was heard once more. He held a runaway by the shoulder and was taking him to the superintendent's office. The office door was locked and the Colonel with one hand full of the boy's coat, stood against the wall, waiting.

Miss Britter looked out. The little prisoner rolled his big eyes in her direction, and she recognized Michael Roate.

*The writer can see in this wretched line faces that he knows, faces of weary boys, some of whom are even now doing penance in this unhealthy manner.

There was a second swing of the doors, and Mr. Krammer, who had been sent for, came in and without noticing Michael, put his key into the lock and opened his office door.

"Mercy," cried Miss Britter, "come away from here at once. If I hear that child cry, I'll go crazy."

They hastily packed their letters away, locked the office door, and started for Nida's cottage. Nida was found fast asleep, so they took the road to the farm and the valley beyond it. When they returned that night, the office light and all other lights were out, and they knew that Michael was resting on the floor of one of the coops, resenting with bitter tears, the lashes he had received.

CHAPTER XIV

VICTORY

The turn in affairs at the last meeting had a dual effect on the boys. There were some who were certain, almost beyond a doubt, that the authorities were against Mr. Liton's work and would make it impossible for him to accomplish what he undertook, and, with frowning faces, they expressed themselves to that effect. On the other hand, most of the boys marked down one after another of his victories, and were as certain that he would be victorious in the end. Both attitudes were degenerating in their effects, for the boys recognized friends and enemies in those who controlled and instructed them, and that was bound to end in disruption of some sort.

On the staff it had a singular effect. The superintendent, realizing that the methods he and his assistants had employed, merely strengthened the adversary's hold on the boys, decided to work with them until the psychological moment should come, when he would change the course of things. He would let them make attempts and *see* that they failed, while his countenance would express friendship and sympathy.

Miss Britter was willing to teach the first grade herself until a new teacher would be brought; but should the new teacher fail as the others did, she would then prevail upon him to appoint her friend, whom she knew to be capable, who had taught other classes of the kind with far-reaching success, and who was willing to come.

Nida's boys had collected a huge bunch of flowers and were happy that her condition had so changed that she was able to come to the class room and receive them.

The teachers collected stacks of manuscripts from the boys, who now felt assured of the publication of the magazine. After school that afternoon, at the call for help in the editorial room, the response was so great that it was almost impossible to choose without showing great partiality. Those who were not chosen were given promises for next time, and Miss Britter's office was turned into an editorial room, and three typewriters and a dozen editors, with Ernest as editor-in-chief, worked away with incomparable zeal. Compositions, stories and poems, remarkably good, were read and marked, and the best set aside for publication. Several boys were given drawing paper and pen and ink, and set to work to draw something suitable for the cover.

By the time the bugle mustered the boys to prepare for supper, almost all the work had been done. A few manuscripts were still to be typewritten, and Mr. Krammer gave the necessary permission to Jack, who had learned to typewrite in the office, to spend the evening in Mr. Liton's room, where Mr. Liton had a typewriter of his own, to finish that work.

There was just time enough before supper to go for a walk, and the same old road was taken. Miss Brand and Miss Greet, who were in the group, expressed their sympathy with the undertakings about to be accomplished, and offered their services. A meeting of the council was planned for the following evening to show what influence it might have on

offenders, and all the teachers were pledged to encourage and support it.

After supper Mr. Liton, who was walking down the main roadway towards his cottage, admiring the autumn evening in the valley and on the hill, saw Jack running towards him, delighted with his job and anxious to begin the work.

They fixed the room up conveniently, arranging the lights to suit the typewriter, and Jack was soon at work at his little table and machine. He worked some time, when Mr. Liton asked him to stop for a while and drink some of the milk that he daily ordered from a neighboring farm, and eat some of the cookies that he had bought in Abolt for the occasion.

"I'll be all through in a few minutes," said Jack. "May I go on till I am through?"

"All right, if you'd rather."

Both were at work again, Mr. Liton in front of his library, which all the boys never tired of admiring, and Jack thumping away at the keys, which to him in this case sounded like music.

"I am through," said Jack finally, and with an air of triumph and importance, handed the neatly written manuscripts to his employer, as he called him.

"Now you have some of this," said Mr. Liton, "and let's sit and talk awhile. You still have three-quarters of an hour."

Jack drank some of the milk nervously and began with something that had evidently bothered him a long time.

"Mr. Liton, do you think that a story of my life would interest the boys—I mean if you published it a little at a time in the magazine?"

"I am sure it would."

"You know my life was different from the lives of most other boys. I have traveled almost all over the world. I have been in Australia, Africa, India, New Zealand, across the Pacific to San Francisco, and across the United States to New York."

"Well—I should say. That will be very interesting. Why didn't you tell me about it before? I should like to have had the first instalment published in the first number."

"I didn't know for sure that you would think it good enough."

"That was foolish. Tell me more about it now."

"I was born in Sydney, Australia," began Jack, with a far-away look in his eyes, "and my father had a cigar store there. They did some gambling and had me run errands. My mother suffered a great deal; I can remember her crying many nights in the kitchen by the lamplight, or on the steps of the stoop looking up the street. Then she and my sister Nan ran away, and about a year later my father wanted to get rid of me and sent me off to an uncle of mine in New York. I was kept on board the first boat like a prisoner. Then I got sick and was left with a white man in Borneo, who kept me a few months sleeping on a board that he put over a kind of bath tub, and I became worse, and then he sent me away on another ship. Like that I went from one ship to another until I reached San Francisco. From there I was taken on many trains to New York. My uncle was nice to me for a little while, and then began to treat me bad. He never let me have a cent, and hit me all the time. I ran away from home, but he caught me and whipped me more. He had a

cigar store, too, and he made me work very hard in it. Then I stole some money and got away as far as Buffalo, where I hoped to get work and then pay him back, but the police caught me there and sent me back, and then I was sent here."

"You don't know where your mother and sister are?"

"No," replied Jack, and began to cry bitterly.

"Don't cry," said Mr. Liton, himself in tears. "I will try to help you find them."

"Oh, no, please don't," begged Jack, very much alarmed, "that may make it worse. That will make them know that I am in a reform school, and maybe they won't want to have me find them. When I leave this place I will work and earn some money, and then I will try to find them, and they won't know that I ever was in a reform school, and they'll be glad to see me."

To Jack's little mind the excitement had brought back pictures so vivid that he felt as if he had been torn from those he loved, all over again. "If my mother had been with me, I never would have come here," he continued.

Mr. Liton tried very hard to comfort him. He knew that every boy was anxious to get into the photography class, and he thought of a scheme.

"I'll tell you what I will do. I am going to put you into my photography class and teach you to make good pictures, and as soon as you get out, I will try to get you a position with a photographer where you can earn money, and then try to get to where your mother is."

This had its effect. In a short while, with the aid of additional promises, he was smiling through

his tears, and the two walked out. Not far from his cottage, to which Mr. Liton was taking him, they met the Colonel.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded of Jack, paying no attention whatever to Mr. Liton.

"I was helping Mr. Liton. Mr. Krammer told me to."

"He didn't tell you to stay as long as this. Get to your cottage right away—double time!"

Before Mr. Liton was aware of what had happened, the boy had left him on a run, while the Colonel turned about and walked away. Mr. Liton was enraged and was half inclined to go after him and tell him what he thought of him, but a second thought sent him on his way to Mr. Staver's cottage.

"Good! you're wanted," cried Nida, just as he entered. "We have several very interesting things we want to entertain you with."

"First, let me introduce you to my wife," said Mr. Staver, "this is the first time she has been up in three months."

Mrs. Staver sat in a well-pillowed chair near the fireplace; the girls sat on either side of her and Rolan sat near his window looking out.

"Then," he continued, "we want you to hear our new violin solo."

"I shall be very glad to, Mr. Staver, but I do wish you could turn the steam on a little."

"Can't. One of the pipes broke. I have been after the engineer and Mr. Krammer till I'm sick of doing so. It is three weeks now and it hasn't been attended to yet. It was mighty cold last night."

"It's cold enough to-night."

"It must be awful in the dormitories. They have all the windows open."

"I heard my boys close them last night," said Mr. Staver, "but I never moved. I let them do it. Why not? Why should they freeze?"

"It's worse though to let them sleep without air."

"You see I haven't got blankets enough for them either. I ordered more blankets last winter, yet I don't expect them for this winter. Our superintendent is economical."

The violin solo was finally played, and Mr. Liton insisted on its being played three times before he would listen to the other entertainment they had for him.

"Now you can tell me what you want to," he said, after the solo ended its third encore.

"We want you to read a few pages from Mr. Krammer's last annual report, where he tells the world what is done at Abolt School to reform the bad boys," said Miss Britter.

Nida interrupted her, "You mean for the *uplift* of the boys in our charge."

"I don't care to read about their uplift," replied Liton, "I have seen them often enough drop them down."

"No, but read it; it is a joke and you'll enjoy it."

"No, no! No reports for me. I have read those lies so many times and in so many forms that it will only make me feel like strangling somebody. I know what he says as well as you do who have read it."

"But you don't know what ideal people we have here, till you read it—how the boys are segregated, how the cottage mothers and fathers study each

individual child in order to give them the greatest possible opportunity of understanding him, and—”

“This refers particularly to Messrs. and Mrs. Bloate and Saunders, and—”

“Please put it away. It’s more like a funeral than an entertainment to me, it makes me weep. Let’s have some more music.”

The concert continued until the lights went out, when everybody retired.

The next evening the council met in Mr. Liton’s class room. The twenty members were seated with all the dignity due them, in the first twenty seats in the room. Behind them, and apart from them, sat those of the teachers who cared to be present, and standing on the right side of the room, lined up against the wall, were the offenders. Mr. Liton sat at his desk, looking over a list of names of offenders and their different offences.

“Samuel King,” he called out, “you are the first on the list. Please come up here in front.”

“Miss Britter will you kindly tell the council what this boy is up here for?”

“This boy,” began Miss Britter, “is in the first grade. Every one of the teachers he has had complains that he starts all the trouble in the room. I want to give him the full fifteen marks every week until he does differently, but I will leave it to the council. If they can suggest anything better, since I am only trying to help Samuel, I will do as they say.”

“What have you to say for yourself?”

Samuel cried as if he was about to be murdered. It took him several minutes to calm down far enough to be able to speak.

"They always say," he sobbed, "that I do it. Everything is blamed on me. I asked her for paper and she made me go to my seat."

"And that happened every single day, did it, Samuel?"

Samuel couldn't answer.

"I move," said one member of the council, rising, "that Samuel should be kept on line for a week, and if during that week he behaves himself and does his work as he should, be allowed to play again, and the reports should not be given to him; but if he doesn't behave himself and doesn't do his work, he should get fifteen marks and stay another week on line."

"I don't agree with that," said another member. "Even bad boys must play. I say we should either let him have the fifteen marks—" Here he was interrupted by the renewed wailing of Samuel. He went on "or, if he promises faithfully to behave himself, hold the fifteen marks over for a week, and if he has kept his promise by that time, we should forget about his marks."

This was then put into the form of a motion, most of the boys having agreed to that, and seconded and carried.

"William Mason," said Mr. Liton, "please come forward."

William Mason was a bigger boy. The matter struck him as being somewhat funny, and he struggled very hard to keep back a laugh, pinching his hands held back of him, looking up at the ceiling and down at his audience at intervals, and wishing that it was all over.

"Miss Brand, is this your boy?"

"Yes, he is."

"Will you kindly tell the council why you have him here?"

"Certainly," said Miss Brand, coming forward. "He is very impudent, talks back, and is always up to all sorts of tricks. I wanted to give him fifteen marks again, but I thought I'd wait and see what the council can do with him."

"What have you got to say for yourself?" asked Mr. Liton.

"I can't say anything," answered William, who had sobered up considerably at the mention of fifteen marks. "What's the use of my sayin' anything; nobody'll believe me anyway."

"If you tell the truth," said Mr. Liton, "there's not a person in this room that won't believe you."

"I try very hard to do the right thing," William began again, "but she, Miss Brand, has made up her mind that whenever I laugh I laugh at her. I don't know what for, and everything I do, she takes for that. I am not impudent, that's my way of talking, that's all."

"Let me tell you, William," said Mr. Liton slowly and seriously, "if you really want to do what is right, you must stop that bad habit of laughing that way. It may be true that you mean nothing bad by that conduct, but it is not only Miss Brand who won't like it, no matter what you mean by it. When you go out into the world, William, you'll be a very unhappy man if you act that way there, if you don't break that bad habit. Nobody objects to honest laughter, but everybody resents, dislikes a silly impudent laugh. And they don't stop to ask why

you do it, out in the world, but they treat you for what you do."

"I move," said another member, "that we ask all the members of the literary and athletic committees not to use him for anything anywhere until Miss Brand tells us next time we meet that he doesn't do that any more."

William frowned a little at that, and another member changed the motion to the effect that if William showed any signs of trying to do better, to Miss Brand's satisfaction, nothing would be held against him.

Miss Brand agreed to that, and promised to make a report at the next meeting. One after another of the offenders was brought to the front of the room, admonished and given the much desired other "chance." The councilmen were inexperienced but showed sign of possible legal ability. As they went on in their work some of them warmed up almost into lawyers, and spoke like little men.

The teachers were certain that the offenders would not cease to offend, but they could not help feeling that there was something about this meeting that promised to grow into a great influence. The boys, on the other hand, now felt that their teachers were anxious to be fair. Then, too, when they received punishments prior to this, offenders always felt that the sympathy of their comrades, no matter whether they were right or wrong, was with them, for they always so expressed themselves in the basement when such matters were discussed; but now there was a different state of affairs. The boys themselves were administering the punishments, and instead of sympathizing with the offenders they

would almost ostracize him from the society he respected most. The law of the gang was their own law, and they respected their own laws, for who, save a slave, respects any but his own "gang" law?—laws that he, in some direct or indirect way has had something to say about in the making.

Early next morning Mr. Liton had an interview with the superintendent, and then left his office overjoyed.

"I am to make out a list for the photographic materials at once, and they will be ordered and here in a week," he told his friends in Miss Britter's office.

The teachers were very glad to be assured of the possibility of a photography class, but the boys, when informed, were more than glad. They could hardly do their work. It was impossible for them to direct their thoughts upon anything else. The boy who was wheeling the rubber hose across the lawn broke into a run at sight of Mr. Liton and enquired, "Will I be in the photographic class?"

"Have you tried to do what was right? Have you behaved yourself in school?"

"Yes, sir; you ask Miss Cane. I get into no trouble at all, and I have had no reports in the last month."

"Then Miss Cane will probably tell me that. I will take only those who know enough to do what is right."

The boy then ran off with his hose, kicking up his heels with delight, as he ran.

On their way with ash-cans, waiting on the steps of the dining room, driving the sheep, going to the farm, or merely crossing the hallway, wherever a

boy happened to meet Mr. Liton, there the same conversation ensued, "Am I going to be in the photography class?"

And always they were answered, "If you have done the right thing, and intend to keep on doing what is right."

Two weeks followed. Never before had the boys experienced feelings of hope and desire, as they did during those fourteen days. Wonderful things were in preparation and each one wondered whether he was going to be a participator, and with every act, curried favor. A dark gloomy coop, a sort of musty attic on the third floor of the school, that for many years had imprisoned and nurtured with the horror of its gloom boy after boy, till the walls and floor upon which they left their names scribbled with jackknife, or nail, or piece of broken window pane, were covered with a hieroglyphic story of brutality, was turned into a photographic dark room, and this transformation unconsciously wiped away half the horror associated in their minds with Abolt School, for one of the gloomiest of all the coops they feared was no more. On the two windows it had, they fastened with hinges, two opaque wooden blinds to shut out the light when absolute darkness was desirable. Shelves were built, and a ruby light was installed, and the boys fought with each other for the opportunity to work up there.

The council, anxious to prove its value, had influenced a number of boys who had been looked upon as incorrigibles, to behave themselves, and some of these fellows so placed in positions of trust for the Republic that they soon looked upon themselves as highly important citizens of the communi-

ty, and saw to it, by special acts of good citizenship, that they were so considered by others. The literary committee gathered a vast amount of contributions to the magazine, and with the athletic committee, planned a great entertainment for their parents and the Board of Directors.

The photographic materials came, and class after class was taken up into the dark room and allowed to feast their eyes upon the most fascinating little cameras, the awe-inspiring big camera, and the whole mysterious outfit. Mr. Liton explained the process rapidly to each class and set up the large instrument, that they might be especially fascinated by the upturned view of the hill on the ground glass. What an effect upon the school that was. There was no other ambition in any boy's heart than, "to do what was right," and become a member of the photographic class.

One Friday morning, a number of days later, Mr. Liton made his way to the superintendent's cottage with a small bundle under his arm. He rang the bell and was asked to come in by the superintendent himself, and after Mr. Krammer had comfortably seated himself in his desk chair, Mr. Liton handed him a number of copies of the *Abolt School Magazine*, anxious to see what effect it was going to have upon him.

But he was disappointed. The superintendent did not seem to be the least enthusiastic.

"Well," he drawled out, "of course it all depends upon how they take to it."

"Don't you think they ought to be very happy with so beautiful a magazine?"

"We don't know how they will take it. That remains to be seen."

Mr. Liton was disgusted. There was no excuse whatever for such an attitude. Instead of encouraging, he was discouraging: if ever any one was out of his province, he was.

"We shall give them out at our meeting this afternoon," said Mr. Liton, coolly, having lost his enthusiasm, "and we should like to have you present and talk to the boys about it. I have arranged with a number of musical friends for their coming this afternoon and playing for the boys. They have formed a quartette and play very beautifully."

"Yes, certainly, I'll come," said the superintendent, suddenly enlivened by an idea. "Are your friends coming for supper?"

"I don't think so."

"Well, I just wanted to say, if they do come for supper, I would be glad to entertain them at my home here."

"I think they will have their dinner before they come," said Mr. Liton, and left.

The musicians came that night as they promised, and when the boys, who were gathered in the assembly room awaiting some great surprise, for this feeling was prevalent, saw the musicians file in and up the platform carrying a 'cello and two violins, they thought that was the surprise and applauded with fervor.

The quartette played three numbers and received an ovation that bade fair to their coming again and again.

When the noise of their approval died down, the door to the left opened and Mr. Liton entered,

carrying a heavy suit case. This was a clue to the real surprise in store for them, and every boy solved the mystery.

Mr. Krammer entered and took a seat in the back of the room, among the cottage fathers and mothers that had come to see what it was going to be like.

Mr. Liton began to speak, and every boy in the room ceased moving. He told them that, beautiful as this first number was, their magazine was going to grow more beautiful and more interesting with each succeeding number. He asked them to continue sending contributions, and concluded by saying that the magazine had so much to say for itself that he felt it unnecessary to add any more, and called upon the representatives to come and get enough copies for each of the boys in their cottages and for the cottage parents.

Like the pressing of a button in a great shop setting the machinery into motion, putting life into a dead, silent factory, so the distribution of the magazine set muscle and brain into action. Some ran through the pages eagerly, some read parts aloud, and others clapped hands. The little fellows who found their own names printed, for any reason whatever, ran up to Mr. Liton, pointed them out to him, their faces burning and their eyes flashing.

Mr. Liton walked along one of the aisles to the back of the room where the superintendent sat, and bending down so that he might hear, said, "Would you like to speak to the boys, Mr. Krammer?"

Mr. Krammer felt queer, but tried to hide his feelings. He turned his face up, and full of smiles, answered, "They don't want to listen to me; they are too busy, just now."

CHAPTER XV

AN INTERMINABLE REFORMATION

Superintendent Krammer was a disappointed man when he awoke on Sunday morning and saw the sky overhung by dark, heavy clouds. So many interesting visitors were coming to see the drill and parade. Mr. Liton was to take a photograph, and the photograph was to accompany an article to be written by a newspaper man who was to be one of the visitors. The superintendent saw himself the most important figure in that picture, and thought of the many people that were to see it. "You can't pull such a stunt off every Sunday," thought he. "If it rains or snows to-day, it may never be done."

There was one hopeful thing about those dark gray clouds. They traveled as individuals, and the wind was blowing them away. It might clear up.

And it did clear up, the visitors did come, and the grounds were one great hive with so many excited bees.

Each cottage had its visiting day. That is, the boys in each set of three cottages could invite their friends to come and visit them one Sunday each month. Cottage One with two other cottages had this Sunday for their friends, and Michael, Dick and Skinny were anxiously awaiting the afternoon.

The Superintendent had issued strict orders, which his trusty assistants obeyed, and now, with his specially interesting visitors, he stood watching the preparations for the great parade, and telling the wonderful things that were being done—of the

many boys who were being reformed and the small percentage that ever returned or were ever sentenced to other institutions.

In the grove that afternoon were gathered the many varieties of parents and packages. The boys with them were dressed in their uniforms and carried their guns awaiting the bugle, when they would have to leave them and go on parade. Among the queer groups of poorly dressed people, one could see an occasional ostrich feather shoot up from some woman's head. Here, too, were to be seen the bare heads of Nida and Miss Britter, gliding about from place to place, as usual.

Michael's mother sat in one corner questioning him. Mr. and Mrs. Dampfel, not far off, were busy with their beloved child, while Dick's friends had to go to the hospital, where Dick was convalescing after a very serious operation.

Mrs. Dampfel was engaged in her usual crying and patting and kissing her offspring, and promising him all kinds of rewards if he behaved himself and earned his parole, when Skinny began to complain plaintively, "I don't feel good. This gun is too heavy for me. I am sick."

Mrs. Dampfel, realizing her inability to do anything for him, continued patting and consoling him. "It won't take long. Then ask them to let you go to bed."

Miss Britter came along. Mr. Dampfel saw her coming in their direction, and he ran to meet her.

"My boy is sick," he told her. "Can't he be excused from parading to-day?"

"Is that so?"

Miss Britter walked up to where Skinny stood with his mother.

"Don't you feel good, Ludwig?" she asked. "What is the matter?"

Ludwig cried, "I don't feel good. This gun is too heavy for me."

"Well, you wait here for me. I'll see that you are excused."

She ran about looking for the authorities, and Nida went with her.

"Oh, Mr. Bloate," she cried upon seeing him, "may I speak to you a moment?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Bloate, and smiled.

"One of your little fellows doesn't feel well. Can he be excused from drill to-day?"

"Who is it?"

"Ludwig Dampfel."

"Skinny? Don't you believe him. He's just making out he's sick. He ain't sick. He hasn't gotten over the licking he got for running away yet. That's what's the matter with him."

Seeing that nothing could be done there, they hurried off to higher authority.

"Colonel Reilly, I would like to speak to you."

"Well?"

"One of the little fellows is sick, and cannot carry his gun. Can't he be excused from drill to-day?"

"Who is sick?"

"Ludwig Dampfel."

"Huh! Skinny! Don't you believe it. Skinny isn't sick. He is the foxiest little fellow here. He can't get over the dose he got some time ago. He is the kind of a kid that knows that people will

sympathize with him, and he takes advantage of you. No, no. Every boy has got to drill to-day."

"But he is ill and can't carry his gun."

"Oh, never mind about that. Every boy's got to drill to-day. Those are the orders."

"I'll see Mr. Krammer about that."

"See whom you like. I don't see what you're buttin' in about anyway. This ain't your province."

Just then the bugle rang out, and every boy deserted his parents at once and made for the line, Skinny among them.

The parade was a success. The newspaper man bubbled over with delight, and formulated his thoughts on "What is being done for the Delinquent." The Superintendent had exhibited his official importance, and had been photographed, and the silk-gloved visitors had applauded with emotion—Skinny had dragged his feet along and carried the heavy gun.

The parade had been a success, and towards twilight the automobiles turned down the hill and away, and the Superintendent, his mind almost intoxicated with the congratulations he had received and was receiving, went with them; but Skinny ate no supper that evening. He proved to his cottage father, beyond a doubt this time, that he was unable to carry himself to the dining room, and so was allowed to go up into the attic and sleep it off on the cadet's bed. His mother and father worried into hysterics, caught Miss Britter by the arm, before they left, and got her promise to let them know just how he felt.

It was seven o'clock that evening, when the winter day had expired and the early night had settled

down upon the hill, biting cold and clear, that Miss Britter, Miss Cane, Mr. Rolan, and Mr. Liton, on their way for a walk, passed Cottage One, saw the light in the cadet's room, and heard a sobbing and a wailing that was heart-rending coming from it.

They rushed to the door and rang the bell.

"Skinny's got a little fever," said Father Bloate, in answer to their question, "that's all."

"May we come in to see him?"

"What for?"

"May I go up to see him?"

"What does anybody have to go up to see him for? He's got a little fever, and my wife's doing all that needs to be done for him."

By this time the moaning became more painful to hear, and Miss Britter became desperate.

"If you don't let me go up to see that child, I shall go to the village at once and get a constable."

Mr. Bloate burning with rage, flung the door open and walked in. Miss Britter and Nida rushed up stairs, while the boys waited for them.

The window above flew open soon after, and Miss Britter put out her head and called down, "Boys, please run to Abolt at once and summon Dr. Wood and a nurse, if possible."

The boys made off for the village, and Miss Britter, Nida, and Mrs. Bloate, sat about the bed on which poor little Skinny, in high fever, extolled the beauty of the parade in terms no newspaper man could make use of.

He was in delirium. He had paraded that afternoon, and he, too, had enjoyed the spectacle, and his eulogy rose into the room and out high into the air.

"Oh, please don't hit me," he cried, and begged and pleaded. "I can't carry that gun—please—please don't hit me—please don't hit me—I can't carry that gun—Oh, oh, my shoulder—oh, my shoulder—I can't carry that gun—please don't hit me—I can't carry that gun."

The women applied cold water to the burning little forehead; then, unable to do any more, sat back upon the chairs which Father Bloate had ordered one of his boys to take up, and cried.

The cadet's room was an unfinished age-stained attic, with its age-stained rafters projecting from the ceiling, and supporting spider's webs and the picture postals that the meditating William had hung upon them. In this little room, upon the very bed upon which his fellow unfortunate was burning away, unconscious, he had often sat and admired his postals and the narrow little world in which he alone of all the rest had a kind of freedom. William was not there, but his better half, the better half that all of us show when we are alone, surrounded by four wooden walls, in a narrow, lightless space, hovered about everywhere, in every corner in which he had a bat or a box for letters or a pile of books. This was his little nook, and here he never was called upon to kick any one. He was not here now, nor was he going to be here this night nor the next. He slept in Skinny's bed.

The doctor came, commented on the height of the fever, and left a dose of medicine and a nurse.

Two nights and a day the child lay upon that little bed, and begged and pleaded. Oh, that his poor little prayers, so much believed in then, might have been answered before. When once death de-

cides to come, it makes no difference how young the little sinner or how unfair fate had been to him, how little of joy or how much of misery and pain have been his reward for living—death comes!

The human bundle of sticks, ashes, and flame, of bone, skin, and fever, was removed to the hospital, and the decrepit father and mother came to bend still more their crooked backs, to watch him—to pray that his life remain and suffering continue. But prayers were useless. The jovial Mr. Sarving sat near them reading a funny page of a magazine, occasionally commanding that the old couple stop yelling, often snoring away in sleep, till the death rattle closed the little throat, stretched out the weary little legs and removed the heavy gun from his childish shoulders.* Then the nurse stretched his limbs and, yawning, covered the little body with a cloth, and conducted the old couple out doors, where the world was white, where all night long had fallen thick and playfully myriads of large flakes, and hidden the bare earth, the bare trees, and the hard edges of the institution.

They trailed past the grove where they had seen him last, stopped one moment; then the old man himself, grown more gray in this single night, took the mother by the arm and hurried past the school and out upon the road towards the railroad station in Abolt.

When they reached the valley below they heard the bugle call, awaking so many, yet unable to wake

*For a report of similar cases see newspaper articles in appendix.

one more. The little bugler's voice called out loud and long, pulled them all but one from their beds, and buried itself in the newly fallen snow.

One less to reform! One interminably reformed!

CHAPTER XVI

THE BATTLE LOST

Skinny left a gloomy spell upon the place. His little body was packed into a small pine coffin and was sent to the home he had longed to see and hoped still to enjoy. The entire week was marked by exceptionally bad weather. It snowed still more, and for a few hours twice that week rain came down and the saturated snow hardened into ice. The boys wore corduroy in place of their canvas suits, and were very cold and miserable, and acted accordingly. Neither the Principal nor her teachers were able to work as they had worked before. Miss Cane, who had helped by sitting up nights with the dying child, was again sick in bed. The cheerless sky itself seemed to hold out over the hill an impending calamity, and with throbbing pulses all seemed to feel it. Colonel Reilly and his staff of officers resented the effect of the death of poor Skinny upon the boys as a whole, and determined to beat that out of them. There was almost a continual yelling and crying coming from some corner of the institution—a boy's ear lobes were jerked into bleeding, several eyes were blacked, one lip was swollen, and one fellow was struck on the wrist with a mop stick, and his hand was temporarily made useless. The place assumed more and more each day the aspect of a slaughter house,* and Mr. Liton made

*"—————, 13 years of age, received at the hospital, November 22, 1912, with severe contusions of the face which he said he received by being struck in the face

a desperate attempt to put an end to those conditions.

It was on Sunday, exactly a week after little Skinny took his leave, that he went to the city to talk the matter over with a lawyer friend of his, and incidentally went to see Mr. and Mrs. Dampfel in their tiny flat in the slums. It was hard to find. After stumbling about a number of dark corridors, and receiving a number of directions from a number of strange people, he rapped on a door that was opened by the now aged Mr. Dampfel. The old man shook his head as a greeting and ushered him into the room that served as a kitchen, dining room, sitting room, and possibly, drawing room. It was neatly kept and in its decoration revealed a touch of the artistic. In the center stood a small table spread with a white clean table cloth and covered with all the finest dishes the old lady possessed. It was ready for a feast.

The gas-light was lit, though it was day time out doors, and for a few seconds Mr. Liton could see nothing, having come from dark corridors, but as soon as his eyes became accustomed to the change in light, he saw the old woman seated on the other side of the table and somewhat apart from it, knitting. She knitted away with exceptional rapidity, apparently in the best of spirits, and the old man, who had resumed his seat near the door, was carefully watching her. Every few minutes she would throw the thing she was knitting upon a

with a butcher knife;

_____, 16 years old, alleged to have been struck on the head with a shovel by a keeper June 9, 1912, treated by _____, a nurse, while Dr. _____ was away."—Philadelphia Inquirer, February 21, 1913, in an article discussing reformatory complaints.

chair near her, stretch, walk to the clock that ticked away on a mantel piece, look at it carefully and long, and return to her former position and occupation.

"She's mad," said Mr. Dampfel, shrugging his shoulders and pointing his thumb at her. "She has prepared a feast for Luddy and expects him home any moment. She says he's paroled."

At sound of the last word she jumped up again and, in spite of the old man's objections, demanded of the stranger, "Haven't you seen Luddy? He's coming home to-day."

"We're to send her away," murmured the old man, when asked as to the fate of his wife. "I expect them here for her every minute."

Poor Mr. Dampfel, he didn't know just exactly what he was going to do about himself. They had come from Germany many years ago and had no friends in this country at all. "About the best thing I can do now," he guessed, "is to die."

Suddenly a shriek escaped the woman, that made things dance before Mr. Liton's eyes. He rose, uncertain as to what was best to be done. The woman had thrown down the material she had been working on and jumped up, tearing her hair. Another shriek escaped her more terrible than the first, and simultaneously with it, to the relief of the old man as well as Mr. Liton, the door flew open and two men in uniforms, accompanied by a policeman, rushed in and grabbed her.

It was an awful struggle; the men fought with her for a few minutes then finally conquered her, bound her hands and feet, and paying no attention to her screaming and tugging, carried her below,

and put her into the ambulance and dashed off with her.

Mr. Liton with Mr. Dampfel had followed them below, but as they reached the hallway on the ground floor, the old man saw the great crowd that had gathered before the building. Without saying a word to Mr. Liton, who was anxious to get out into the open, he hastily retraced his steps back into his shattered home. It was the last Mr. Liton ever saw of him. He rushed out upon the street and on to his friend's, lest he, too, lose his mind.

"There is nothing to be done," his legal advisor informed him. "These things are controlled by powers you can't meddle with. Liton, I'm sorry to tell you so, but it is true, nevertheless, your battle is lost, and, as a friend of yours, I'd advise you to leave and forget about it. There is not a paper in this city save perhaps a socialistic or anarchistic paper, that will print your story, and I don't care how much they prate about being the friends of children and so forth. There are a number of members of the board of directors of your institution who advertise, department stores and other kinds of stores, in every paper of any value in the city, and no paper will tell the truth about anything that an advertiser is interested in. You try it and you'll find it so. I'm talking from experience. If they don't succeed in proving before the public in the very newspapers that claim to be the friends of children that you are incapable, they will get plenty of witnesses to prove that you are insane, and if they can't prove that, they will at least have succeeded in blacklisting you so that no other school will have any faith in you. Just one year ago, the only cour-

ageously honest nurse of an institution for the infirm brought charges of the most gruesome sort against that institution, and most of the people connected with it knew that every word she uttered was truth itself, yet, after a mock trial, before boards of directors and investigating committees, and with the help of doctors of renown, she was *found* to be insane, and is now reported as dying in an asylum."

Mr. Liton listened carefully to every word his friend uttered and ran his hand through his hair a number of times as if in despair. His friend watched him, beginning to feel that he had convinced him, when Mr. Liton suddenly arose, grabbed his hat, and started for the door.

"I shall not leave," he said, "I am going to win that battle right there on the grounds."

It was three o'clock the next morning when he boarded the first train going to Abolt. The city was steeped in the long winter night, and the wind blew hard through the streets. The sky was clear and studded with stars, while the belated moon still cut its brilliant shape above a towering skyscraper.

The car he boarded contained a number of half-dozing workmen, and he took his seat as one of them, cleaning the frost-covered window pane, that he might look out upon the retreating city. At every station, he could see many workers, carrying tin pails, already going to their work, and very often children went with them.

By the time he reached Abolt the dawn had wiped out the night, and the wintry landscape, the woods and homes sparkled in the light, and the snow ground beneath his feet. He made his way up the old hill, as he had done countless times, but new feelings

greeted him now. He was worn out for lack of sleep, yet fully aroused by the forced exercise; and, when the smell of breakfast coffee from the dining room greeted his nostrils, a feeling of hope came over him. Every thing seemed very quiet and peaceful. The night wind had subsided, and the smoke from the chimneys wound up slowly and gracefully. It was apparent that the cold weather was going to relent, and with it the hard spirit on the grounds between teachers and cottage parents, officers and pupils. But when Mr. Liton stood before his class that morning he knew that something was wrong.

They were having a lesson in algebra. He had given the boys a problem, and they were at work trying to solve it. One of his boys suddenly rose from his seat, walked up to his instructor and handed him a sealed envelope. Not wishing to take the boys' time to read what was in it, he placed it in his desk. But it bothered him. Finally he decided to read it at once, and putting a number of problems on the board asked his pupils to do all of them and took the envelope out again. It read—

“Dear Mr. Liton:

I want to ask if I can resign my job as president of Cottage One. It has only gotten me into trouble. Yesterday evening we had a meeting. While we were planning lots of things, Michael Roate, our representative, got up and said that he heard that Cottage Father Saunders laughed at our magazine and our republic. He said that Mr. Saunders did that before the magazine was published, and that after he saw the magazine he said to a few boys that the boys didn't write their own stuff, but that they stole it from books, and that none of it was theirs. This made him and the boys mad,

and they voted it should be told the council, and that the council should tell that to Mr. Krammer.

"Now, when we first had that meeting I asked Mr. and Mrs. Bloate to come in and even preside over the meeting if they wanted to, but they didn't want to, and Mr. Bloate was a little drunk, too. Please, Mr. Liton, don't let *anyone* see this letter because they'll kill me for it. Instead of coming in with us to stay at the meeting, he went into the sewing room by the other door and lay down by the door going into the sitting room, where we were, and listened. Michael had just finished, after we voted to tell Mr. Krammer, saying that if Mr. Saunders called us liars and thieves that we should call him a liar and thief and drunkard; when Mr. Bloate opened the door and ran in on us, broke up the meeting, and hit Michael and some of the other boys, and made us all go down stairs. I wanted to show him the minutes and ask him why he was mad, but he only struck me on the mouth.

"Then he went to Mr. Krammer, and Mr. Krammer called for Michael and gave him a big beating and transferred him to Mr. Saunders' cottage, and now because Michael said that about Mr. Saunders, Mr. Saunders will revenge upon him plenty.

"Mr. Liton, please, I don't want to be any more president and get lickings for it and reports. I want to keep still after this, take everything, and just wait for the chance to get out of here.

Your friend,
SAM PHELPS."

Mr. Liton was beside himself with anger. The boys saw him read the letter and knew why he was so excited.

At noon he rushed into the office.

"Yes, there was considerable trouble there last

night," said Mr. Krammer, when the matter was laid before him.

"But have you investigated thoroughly, Mr. Krammer?"

"To my satisfaction."

"What have you concluded?"

"That the republic business is not a thing for an institution like this. I have been in this business twenty years, Mr. Liton, twenty years, and I know boys of this sort better than you do. I know what the truth is no matter what a boy may be telling you. They can't manage a republic, and I can't bother with the troubles that follow. I have a new scheme, though. Suppose we start an entirely new affair. Say we have each cottage represented and once a month have a meeting at my house or in the school building, or in my office, and provide refreshments for the occasion. Every meeting will be a sort of festival, and the boys will be willing to behave themselves a whole month to be able to get into this meeting."

"That means, of course, that that ends the republic?"

"Yes, I think it's better."

Mr. Liton had nothing more to say, and was about to leave the room when the Superintendent called him back. Mr. Liton was weary from the lack of sleep and the turn in affairs, and evidently was not in fighting spirit, even if he was in the mood. Mr. Krammer having felt the joy of the victory, thought this was his opportunity for putting an end to the whole aggravating business.

"There was something else I wanted to speak to you about, Mr. Liton, and I might as well do it

now. Eh, somebody—was telling me—eh, that you, eh, have made preparations for the printing of the second number of the magazine. You understand, of course, that so far I have sanctioned the printing of the first only. I wanted to see the effect it would have on the board and on the boys—an experiment, you see. Now I shall present a copy of the first number to the board and if, in their estimation, it is worth while, let them provide a fund for the purpose.”

“But, Mr. Krammer, you told me that you would contribute ten dollars a month, and then had the boys vote as to whether they wished to have the monthly good behavior money used to make up the other fifteen dollars. I had no desire to work as I did to get out only one issue.

“You are mistaken, Mr. Liton. I never offered you ten dollars a month. I can’t afford that. I merely thought that that would go to the publication of a single number as an experiment, and if it proved worth while, that we would be able to interest some of the members of the board.”

“Mr. Krammer, are you still doubtful as to whether it is worth while or not?”

“I am not, but the board probably will be.”

“I have several letters in my room as contributions from the boys, which proves very conclusively that the magazine has had a great influence on them, and that to withhold it this month would mean a loss of faith in it, and—why boys will be mourning for it. I have one letter where a boy tells that he has formed a partnership with another boy for the purpose of writing stories every evening. Both think them up and both spend their time writing what

they think. You know what a problem it is to keep boys from doing and thinking the wrong things, evenings."

"Well, that letter is a good one. Keep them all and when I have the board here as visitors I will speak to them about it, and you can then show the letters and help me get them interested."

An expression of despair spread over Mr. Liton's face, for he began to realize how impossible it was for him to work with that management of the institution, and, as that feeling deepened on his face, the Superintendent seemed to grow more lively and enthusiastic. His scheme was working beyond his expectations.

Mr. Liton left the office.

"The best thing we can do," said Miss Britter, when at three that afternoon, they were on their way to Abolt and discussing the matter, "is to resign. They are too strong for us. We can never get them all out, and it is impossible for us to accomplish anything while they are here. This noon, when I saw Miss Brand and Miss Greet in a very happy and secretive conversation with Colonel Reilly and Bloate, I knew that something was up."

"Certainly," said Nida Cane, who had come along under the protest of her friends, who thought she should have stayed in bed, "Miss Brand will be made principal, and Miss Greet will be made spiritual adviser, and it will be just grand. As for me I don't care any more what happens. I want to get out as soon as I can, or I'll go as poor Luddy went."

They came down to the village station with a feeling within them that the scenery that had become a part of their little world was soon to pass

away. This, as they looked about the snow-covered trees and shrubbery and fences, was a little world, and they were about to die from it. They looked at everything with emotions of farewell and regret—the station, the grocery store, where they had bought milk and crackers and cocoa so often; the ice cream parlor, with its queer yet familiar tables and chairs and pictures, where they had spent so many pleasant hours; the picturesque roadway that led to Hilledale, with its brilliantly lighted streets and stores, where they had eaten so many dinners, over which they had laughed and talked and argued; and the roadway to the other and higher hill, with its monastery towers and celestial view, which they now called Tower Hill.

They waited at the station, as they had waited many times before, and as happened each time, but never so significantly, the train on its way to the city drew in, stopped a moment, then pulled out again, taking them with it.

They went to the house of a friend who had a typewriter, and immediately set to work to draw up a letter to the board.

They pointed out very clearly and concretely that the morals of the school were corrupt; that indecent men and women were employed, who brutally ruined their boys' chances of reform, who made obstacles of themselves whenever an attempt was made to morally uplift them, and who criminally beat and abused them; that men and women were among the staff who came home drunk, and were *immoral*. Instances of wrongdoing and abuse were given, and affidavits offered to prove them.

"We are convinced," they wrote in conclusion, "that it is impossible for us to go on trying to help them unless some attempt is made to investigate and then to change the conditions that are making our working for the boys impossible. Every attempt either to educate or to train the boys in the right direction has been baffled. We hold that the boys who come to a reform school do so largely because of a lack of appreciation of the law, as agreement between people for the good of all, and that to help them acquire that appreciation they must be given the chance to feel the necessity for law and then to make that law, and finally to respect it. We started a republic that worked beautifully and was carrying us on the road to that great accomplishment. Because a cottage father, who is seldom free from intoxication, came in and broke up a cottage meeting, the Superintendent, without investigation as to the cause, has destroyed the republic.

"We started a magazine. The response on the part of the boys was most hopeful. They went wild about it, and it was worth such excitement as you will see by the enclosed copy. By plots which we can make clear to any investigator, that was discontinued.

"In view of these facts, and the many more which we can lay before the board when they are desirous of having us do so, you will see that unless the conditions are changed to an extent, at least, we are useless here. Please advise us as soon as possible what we may hope for."

Each one signed the document, and it was registered and posted.

"I don't care whether they will sympathize with us or not," said Mr. Liton, "they must investigate in the face of such charges."

The secretary of the board was a friend of the Superintendent. He read the letter and answered it immediately. Mr. Liton's hopes that the facts they presented in that letter would stir the board to some kind of action proved groundless. Hardly a day and a half passed before a reply was received.

"After careful consideration," said the letter, "we conclude that the facts presented warrant no action on our part.* We are sure that the Superintendent will adjust these matters."

"I told you that they will do nothing," said Nida. "I know them, every one of them. They are a set of busy men and leave all these matters to a few individuals with whom Krammer has business relations, and who have become his personal friends."

"There is only one thing that we can do now," said Liton.

"Resign!"

"Do you agree, Rolan?"

"I certainly do."

Mr. Liton brought his typewriter into his class room, and the resignation was written.

*"This statement was made by Mr. ——— after the meeting: 'We examined several witnesses and heard all charges. I saw no evidence of irregularity on the part of any official of the institution. There were about five charges in all. We heard the boys and we heard the officials named. We also heard Mr. ———. There was no evidence against any of the officials.' . . . Mr. ——— would make no effort to reconcile his conflicting statements as to the authority of the committee, which, he said was not empowered to hear charges, yet which did hear them according to his own admission."—Philadelphia Times, Feb. 20, 1913.

"I am still of the opinion," said Mr. Liton, stopping the noisy keys for a moment, "that when they realize that we are very serious, they will do something. Surely they don't want the trouble that would follow our going away. I am going to write this so that they feel that we do not want to leave, that we will be glad to go on working if they only make it possible for us, but that if they have no desire to change the conditions we complain of, or even to investigate our charges," he swung back into position and went on writing and when he reached the last sentence, cried out, "We ask you to consider this our joint resignation."

This, too, was signed by the four of them, and they started for the post office to register and post as before.

They had their dinner again at the restaurant at Hilldale, and returned very late that night; and as they came upon the grounds and stopped a moment to look over the vistas towards the right and left, glorified by the silent night, the moon, the stars, and snow, a feeling of despair came over them. "What if it is accepted?"

One day of suspension followed—suspension so heavy that it was impossible to work under it. But the day wore away and a letter at the post office broke that suspension with a little sentence of half a dozen unmistakable words: "*Your joint resignation is hereby accepted.*"

"Surely you will give me a week's time," cried Superintendent Krammer, with the air of one who deserved *at least that much courtesy*.

"We will give you a few days, and no more. We are out of place now and the sooner we can go, the better for you."

CHAPTER XVII

TWILIGHT DEEPENS INTO NIGHT

The sun broke out again over the hill and brought a new and warmer day, and before half of it was spent, much of the snow had melted and passed away in streamlets down its rugged sides. From the cottage roofs the drops fell and dug into the remaining snow beneath, and when evening came these drops hardened into icicles, as if a few of them had huddled together to sleep through the night; and when the next day the sun rose still warmer, and the snow melted still more, and the streamlets ran faster and fuller, nature had blessed the hill with a beauty that was magnetic; but with all its power it could not tear away the gloom that had fallen upon the place.

Miss Britter walked into Nida's room to talk to her.

One boy raised his hand.

"Yes?"

"When is Mr. Liton going to take our pictures?"

"I'm afraid Mr. Liton isn't going to. Mr. Liton, Miss Cane, Mr. Rolan, and I are all going away tomorrow."

This was a younger class, and only a very few of the pupils had heard of this before. They sat up for a moment and scrutinized her face. Surely she was only joking, but, when they had looked long enough, they were assured that it was no mere joke, and some began to cry. Miss Britter left the room.

It was no mere sentimentality to them. They all knew who were their friends, and they knew who their enemies were, and when they realized that all their friends were going and that all their enemies were to remain, was there anything strange about their crying? They not only cried, some wept. "They'll kill us now you're going."

A group gathered about Miss Cane and some were wild enough to embrace her, and they begged, "Please don't go, please do not leave us, they will kill us now."

A note was taken into the office:

"I can not teach the class to-day. Please send some one else in. I am sick. NIDA CANE."

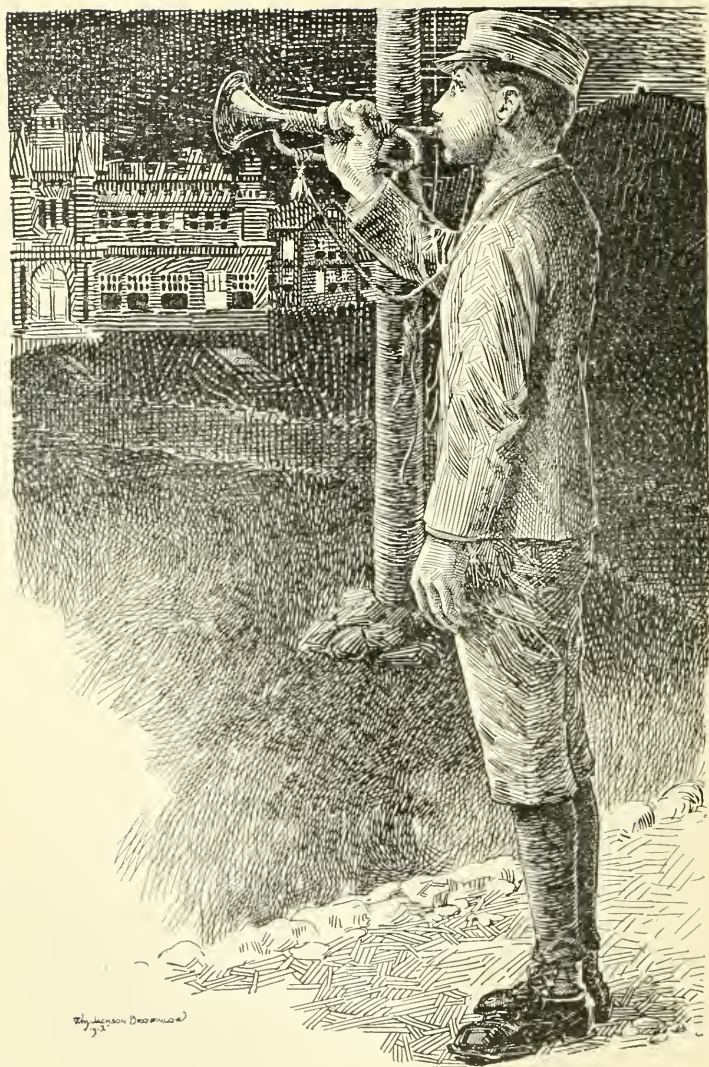
A cottage father was sent in to take care of the class, while Miss Cane made her way to her room, and fell upon her bed exhausted.

The day wore on, and in spite of nature's gladness, misery increased upon Abolt Hill. Boys cried and determined to get even for the treatment they were receiving, and kicking, beating and slapping filled the corridors and the evening air with crying voices.

School over, the authors of the joint resignation went to their rooms and began to demolish what once was home. The pictures were taken down, the book shelves emptied, and boxes and trunks taken out of their hiding.

Mr. Liton worked thus until four o'clock in the afternoon, but his heart became so heavy, he could not continue.

"We can do the rest tomorrow," he said to himself. "I'm going to gather them all and go to the village."



Wm. Jackson (Dessau)

They were all anxious to go, so that within a few moments they were following the network of streamlets down the hill on their way to the restaurant at Hilldale. Such delicate purple and pink in the sky, such blue and brown on the wooded hills and roadways, they had never seen before. A newspaper, outgrown in usefulness, an obstinate leaf that had resisted the force that carried its fellows off weeks ago, and a broken twig gave way to the windy tugging and flew out of the woods, greeted them, and went on in graceful curves into the valley. The snow began to harden, the streamlets gurgling softened down tenderly as the night drew its icy mantle over them, and, by contrast, forced out the lights of the village.

They ordered a good dinner, ate very little, and tried to cheer each other up.

They hurried back. The forest cast big shadows and each individual tree its individual shadow upon the snow and the ice covered waters. The houses revealed warm lights from within. Dogs barked, and the moon and stars shone clear and cold. The ground that was exposed was hard and rough. The snow creaked under their feet and under the lonely horse and wagon that passed them. For the last time, for them, Taps rose from the passing hill right into the clear heavens, and wailed pathetically and fervently. It was for them, it must have been. The little bugler knew, and he drew his tones out long and with feeling, and they touched the hilltop and sank into the valley like a human sigh.

Mr. Staver threw his doors open for them, and his welcome was warm. "I feared you wouldn't come to-night."

"How could we leave without a final concert?"

"That's what I thought, and hoped you would think."

Mr. Staver lit the mass of paper and kindling under the log, in the fire-place, saying as he did so, "In token of—"

They answered with a smile. The phonograph was brought in and given its place at the head of the room on the library table. Mrs. Staver came out carefully with her husband's help and seated herself in the bedded rocker near the fire-place.

Each one took the usual seat and the concert began. As soon as Mr. Staver had placed a record on the machine he would put the lights out, for the flickering light from the burning log seemed more appropriate to the occasion and the music.

All the violin and vocal solos they had heard so many times, bringing back feelings and recollections of conditions when they had first been heard, were played, some as many as four times over, so that before they were through, the power had been shut off and candles substituted, and the grate filled with ashes had to be replenished. Mr. Staver hurried before to get another log.

"So you're going away?" said Mrs. Staver.

"Yes, tomorrow."

"You ought to be glad, children, let me tell you. I wish I had never seen this place. I stood it one year and I got all I wanted. I haven't been well since I have come here. Frank expects a job in the city, and as soon as he gets it we get out, and let me tell you I won't be sad as you are when I go. It will be the happiest moment I have had in the last

year. What have you to lose? I have lost my health and I doubt whether I will ever regain it."

Suddenly a yell of "Who's there?" came from below, and the tone of voice was startling enough to send Mr. Rolan and Mr. Liton to Mr. Staver's assistance.

He had been trying to get a log from under a great many boards and thought he heard some one moving at the extreme end of the dark bin, which was nothing more than a hole made by boxing up an angular excavation, not high enough for a boy to stand upright in, and at that particular end half filled with old boards.

"Hold this light," he said to Mr. Liton, shaking with excitement. "I think it's a runaway, and he seems half dead. He's been cooped in there for several days."

Mr. Staver bent down and on hands and feet crawled in a yard or two and called out again, "Who's there?"

There was no response other than a low moaning. He crawled farther, and after considerable struggling, reached in and grabbed an arm. It was almost impossible to drag the boy out, and Mr. Liton, handing the candle light to Mr. Rolan, had to crawl in and help. The boy was finally pulled out, a miserable specimen of a child. Small as the light was, he couldn't bear it and rubbed his eyes. His clothes were almost torn off him and he stood in his stockings, his shoes hanging to his side by their laces. In one hand he held a little bundle of food wrapped in a newspaper. It contained a piece of bologna and two slices of black bread.

"Do you know how long that boy's been in there?" asked Mr. Staver, and receiving no reply answered himself. "Since Saturday, and my boys have been feeding him."

"What is your name?" cried Mr. Staver, addressing himself to the heap that seemed to stand clinging to the wall, his back bent as if guarding against a blow that might come. The child answered in an undertone, plaintively, "Lester Daniels."

Lester was helped upstairs and asked to sit down on a chair near the fire-place, where he cried and worried, while Mrs. Staver limped back into her room to make a bit of hot cocoa for him.

"I discovered their plot last Sunday night," said Mr. Staver to the two men, while Miss Britter and Nida straightened the little fellow's clothes on him, and brushed back his hair. "You see, he had planned to run away one night and hide in my bin, and the next night, that was Sunday night, three of my boys were to join him and make their escape. One of my dormitory keys was stolen, and everything would have worked well, but I noticed something about them and watched. I espied the key, tied to a string on Max Stem's neck, and asked him for it. I didn't want him licked, so I just took him aside from the rest and gave him a talking to. You see this fellow was waiting for them, and there's no telling how long he would have waited in that hole. He might have died there."

Lester drank his cocoa and felt better.

Mr. Staver, as he had to, went to call Colonel Reilly, and Miss Britter refused to wait another

moment. Bidding farewell to their hosts, the four of them took the road towards the farm.

There stood the dilapidated house in the valley, and as they looked at it, its shadowy form in the night cut itself into their thoughts. It was the last time they were to see it.

"Look," cried Nida, bewildered, "isn't it on fire?"

Rolan and Liton dashed towards it, and just as they arrived at the gate they saw a tramp rush from its dilapidated front door and escape in the woods. Rolan ran for the farmer, but before they could come back the flames were oozing out of the windows, and lighting up the valley. Soon there followed a crash and first the roof, then one by one the walls fell in and were consumed.

They had been standing several hours and gazing upon the scene and with them stood a number of farmer boys and men; then when most of the crowd had left, and they grew tired and sleepy and the flames had crawled to the fallen old tree trunk about which the snow had been melted, and began to consume that, they turned and left the smouldering heap and the few that persisted in watching it to its end, and came upon the grounds to Mr. Staver's cottage.

There was no one to be seen. The candle lights had been put out and Lester was gone.

There was no sign of life anywhere, save the watchman on his rounds, and the night was filled with the smell of burnt wood and smoke. Each returned to his or her own room to spend the last night there, and for long after their parting and until the dawn swept away the darkness, four

candles flickered away into streams of hardening wax.

There were about twenty boys that Mr. Liton had a message for next morning. These he made it his business to see, then, like the rest, completed his packing.

"We must not let them see us go."

"At five o'clock everything had been attended to, and while the boys were having their evening meal the four disappointed comrades took the path down the hill. There was no looking back. On they went until the cottage roofs and power-house smoke-stack were lost behind a rising stretch of woods, and Abolt station was reached.

The train pulled in. Half an hour later the hill and all their hopes, together with the heap of ashes and the gaping black cellar hole in the valley, passed out of their lives, and twilight deepened into night.

CHAPTER XVIII

A FLIGHT TO TOWER HILL

One of the boys, seated at the end of his table in the dining room, looked out of the window and saw the four teachers hurriedly walk down the pathway, and one by one enter the opening in the long line of bare limbed trees and bluish brown shubbery and pass out of sight. On the roadway he saw the farmer driving the heavy farm wagon, loaded with trunks, towards the gateway—he too disappeared.

"They're gone now!" cried the boy as softly as his excitement allowed, "and we won't see them any more!"

The puritanic hungry-looking cottage mother standing near his table, did not have her old shoe with her, but making use of the palm of her hand, which was as dry and lifeless, punished the boy for his offense, and then in disgust, wiped her hand with her towel as if the hand had been the victim of cruelty.

The boys took up the information, however, and soon it reached the next table and before long the news had spread about the dining room. Colonel Reilly lifted up his massive figure in defiance, and paraded it up and down the long cement floor. The dignified Superintendent, perhaps for the first time in his twenty years of experience, joined him, and paraded and watched with him for a while; then walked out.

The atmosphere in the room had not been very conducive to appetite so that only those whose

hunger was greater than their fear ate at all. Tears streamed down the faces of some of them, while the eyes of all kept shooting nervously from side to side as Authority made its way from one end of the long room to the other.

The little bell rang. Supper was over and every boy jumped to his feet. Colonel Reilly folded his arms and looked sharply around, his head slightly lowered and his eyes straining upwards. They stood perfectly quiet with caps on shoulders waiting for him. Michael's tired right arm holding his cap on his left shoulder fell for an instant and was lifted up again. The Colonel walked slowly towards him his eyes fixed on the other end of the room, and, while Michael stood staring at the floor, a big hand shot at him and struck him upon the mouth. Michael reeled and his eyes filled with tears. Two drops of blood oozed from his lower lip. An expression of anger flashed upon his face and disappeared, and a bitter cry was subdued and swallowed. Michael was being reformed and non-resistance was becoming a policy with him.

He swallowed his anger, wiped the blood from his lip, held back the tears in his eyes, and stood quietly where he was supposed to stand.

Colonel Reilly laughed in his heart, when he saw the effect his method of discipline now had upon Michael. "With them creatures out of the way, they'll obey all right." His face flushed with pride, his voice grew even more authoritative, and he swung himself about with the grace and power of a god.

A great change was wrought upon the grounds of Abolt School. Obedience became a popular

virtue, and the minority received as they bought. Slap, bang, kick, and yell, day after day and minute after minute, for big offences, little offences, and for no offence at all. One fellow had his coat ripped off of him, another had his ear lobe torn, a third had his teeth broken, and a fourth his eye blacked.

Many of the members of the staff were hilarious over what they considered their victory, and the sentence, "Good riddin's of bad rubbish," was heard from one end of the hill to the other.

A new principal and several new teachers came a week later. The principal, a Mr. Frederick Ope, was a *College Graduate*, a civil engineer who after a number of failures realized that he had taken the wrong vocational track, and finding nothing else to do tried his *hand* at teaching. He was a slave of whiskey, tobacco, and every one who desired to make himself his master, and took up the reins of office with the well-grounded feeling that he need not concern himself as to where he was going to drive. Colonel Reilly had a hand upon those reins, and whatever of the straps was left hanging down, the leer-eyed principal accepted with the grace of an experienced driver, and had real sensations of driving.

Upon his arrival, the Superintendent informed him that Colonel Reilly had charge of the school discipline, and that he, the principal, was to make himself useful to the teachers only as far as subject matter was concerned; adding, "Any information you may want regarding the work we have been doing, you can get from Miss Brand, who has been here a very long time and who is a very capable teacher."

Mr. Ope accepted the advice as gratefully as he abided by the order, and never ceased informing himself as to what had been done at the Abolt School, and his informer in an equally happy state of mind accepted her appointment.

The hallways rang once more with the military commands and the voices of friends seemed hushed forever. "Hip, hip, hip," took the place of encouraging appeals, and echoing from wall to wall, those fear-inspiring sounds made a kind of sordid duet with the sickening thud of the many weary feet upon the hard cement floor where they moved an inch at a time.

Many weeks passed by, and each boy, in a degree of his own, adapted himself to the new conditions, forgetting all that his little soul had heard in better times. Some boys were paroled and many new ones came. The old spirit smouldered and died and a new spirit was born.

Day after day, sometimes four and five times a day, Colonel Reilly called upon the principal and asked him whether he had any names of boys who were in need of disciplining; and day after day the leer-eyed, obliging principal gathered the names and gave them in.

"You see," the Colonel said to him one day, "they came here and tried to tell *me* how to run a reform school, and they got left."

"What they deserved," grinned the principal.

"They didn't know these boys at all. They didn't see the stealing of apples and what not, that I saw; and wanted to treat them as if they were angels. But they are no angels in my eyes. They're a bunch of little thieves, and should be treated as such. You

can't treat a pickpocket and a thief as you would a good child, can you?"

"Of course not. Sheer ridiculousness."

"But they didn't want to know this. What was the result?"

"I can imagine."

"Back talk! Disobedience! Impudence! It was terrible. Look at the discipline I have now—quite a difference, eh? In a short while, you will see a still greater difference. I haven't had a chance yet to round all of them up."

"Oh, sure not. I have a few in Miss Brand's class and a few in the High School class that need some rounding up."

"High School class!" said the Colonel, "Believe me, they don't want no High School class in this school."

"You're right there," answered the leer-eyed principal, taking his right hand out of his right-hand pocket and putting his left hand into his left-hand pocket and correspondingly changing his feet on the chair before him. "I am certain that it will be better, as you say, to do away with that High School class. They're not fit for it at all."

Colonel Reilly left the principal in his office, a cold-looking place now, without pictures on the walls and with the floor littered with wrapping paper.

Half an hour later, he issued from the Superintendent's office and made for the High School class room. A young man, who might have been taken for a brother to the principal, opened the door and admitted the Colonel in time to see a few of the slower boys clatter to their seats. The High School

teacher's face turned very red, and his class became as busy as they could make themselves appear in so short a time.

The Colonel looked at them ferociously for a few moments, then called out slowly, "Tifton, come with me."

Louis Tifton came forward no little worried as to what he might be wanted for.

"Come along with me," repeated the Colonel and closed the door behind him.

Louis followed him closely, wondering a great deal, but asking no questions. The Colonel inserted a key into the key-hole of the door of the photographic dark room, threw it wide open, and they entered. With his two big hands he tore off, first one and then the other of the two wooden blinds that the boys had hinged to the windows to keep the light out, and Louis carried them below to the power house where he threw them upon a pile of kindling wood. When he returned the Colonel told him to take the large camera and that part of the materials that belonged to it to Mr. Krammer's home, and the small cameras and the rest of the materials to his office, and soon there was nothing left in the room. The names scratched upon the walls and the floor seemed to come out again.

"Wait here for me," said the Colonel, and went below.

Louis walked up to one of the small windows and looked out upon the eastern hill and thought, till he heard some one coming upstairs. He turned and saw the Colonel enter with a stick in his hand, and he almost fainted in fright.

"This room," began the Colonel, "is going to be the disciplining room. You're to watch it, and this stick is for your use. See that you make them mind. I'm going and when I come up again, I will have a few boys with me. They are to get on their knees and you are to see that they stay on their knees, do you understand?"*

"Yes, sir."

The Colonel walked down once more and soon returned with Sam Phelps, Dick Kennen, and Manuel Rogirs behind him.

All three were ordered to get on their knees against the wall, and told to remain that way on pain of very severe punishment.

"You snitched on us, didn't you?" demanded Manuel when the Colonel's steps were heard to have reached the ground floor below.

"I did not," returned Louis, indignantly, "I never said a word to him and he didn't ask me."

"Say," whispered Manuel, "shut the door."

"Naw, it's better open. We can hear if anybody's coming."

"Say fellows, let's us four beat it."

There was silence for a few moments, and all thought it over, then Louis objected.

"What's the use of my going now, I'll be paroled very soon anyway. If I run away and they catch me, I'll only have to serve all my time over again."

*"A whipping room, in which long rattan sticks are soaked in a tub of vinegar before being laid across the backs of the young inmates who are due for a whipping is one of the particular cruel features of _____, according to _____, Jr., now a cripple who was released from the institution yesterday."—Philadelphia Times, Feb. 20, 1913.

"Don't you fool yourself," put in Dick, who for his short time at the institution, half of which had been spent in the hospital, was remarkably well acquainted with its methods. "Even if your time is up, they never let you go."

"Well, I'll see when my father comes—if they don't let me go, I'll beat it with you."

"You don't learn nothing, get beat—" Sam Phelps couldn't finish his sentence. He was mercilessly interrupted by a subdued burst of laughter at his naivety, but would not give way. "Sure," he sneered, "Didn't yous yourself grunt about how much yous were learning when Mr. Liton was here?"

"That's true," Manuel began again, in the hopes that he might thus avoid a break in the conspiracy, "I want to tell you my scheme. We four fellows can land safely in New York. I got the dough. We can catch the midnight train at Hilldale. I know where it is, I've been there bushels of times. In New York we can make piles of money and when we have enough skip to Canada and be free."

"That's a good scheme, all right," said Dick, "I'm game."

They heard a step on the stairway and hastily got into the required position. It was the Superintendent, himself, coming.

He stood for a moment or two at the threshold, staring at the culprits who assumed extremely meek expressions, and admiring Louis, who seemed a lion in power and unflinchingly severe.

"You keep your hands behind you there," thundered Mr. Krammer, pointing at Dick who had forgotten about that part of his punishment, then

turned to Louis and said very softly, "Come out here a minute."

"I was in the city yesterday," he began, "and I went to see your father, and you will be glad to hear, that I have made some excellent arrangements for you, Louis."

Louis' face grew red.

"I told your father and mother that, because you were a very good boy, I am going to give you a job. You are a pretty big boy, and as you know your parents need your help. You have had quite a little schooling here, but if you should desire more we can arrange for that too. At any rate, the Colonel and I have agreed that you are the boy for this job. We are going to make this a disciplinary room, where the boys who can't behave themselves—" Here he perceived that one of the boys inside was out of position and quickly dashed in to correct him.

"I was saying, those boys who can't behave themselves in their class rooms will spend their time on their knees, up here. I have made arrangements with your father. I will send him a sum of money every month, and let you have a little for yourself, too, and you will be working for the institution. You will not be considered as one of the boys any more, and will have plenty of freedom. You will get a cadet's room all to yourself and will be able to take a day off every other week and go home to your people. You know, of course, that when a boy is paroled from this school, he is still under our care and can be brought back at any time. You can work yourself up here, and become a cot-tage father or a teacher, if you want to."

Louis' eyes filled with tears. For the last few months he had been counting the days that were between him and his long desired return to home and freedom, and now, because of a compact of which he had known nothing, and to which he would never have consented, he was again, and this time hopelessly, a slave.

The Superintendent, on the other hand, was certain that the boy was shedding tears of gratitude, for, in his way of thinking, what could a fallen boy desire more than a good steady job. Had he not tried to make them feel that it is better to be honest than to have a great deal of money and enjoy life? Didn't he impress upon their minds that there is nothing in life more worth while than service, by reading so many times, Elbert Hubbard's "A Message to the Employee?" Had he not, by this time, inculcated into each of them the desire to emulate the peaceful, contented man, who serves his employer and his country, obeys all law and respects order, and eats his honest piece of bread, poor and tasteless though it be?

Relieving himself of very warm congratulations, the Superintendent left the coop, and made his way down the three flights of stairs.

"My father had no right to do it," cried Louis when at his post again, after he had recited every word of the conversation, "I'm game, now, all right, but let us get away to Canada even quicker than you say. I won't go home either. If they catch us they'll make me stay two years more or even three and then I'll be free. If I stay at this job I never will be free again."

For several days Louis was at his post, always friendly to his victims when alone with them and always very severe when an officer was present. One morning Michael Roate was brought into the coop and forced down upon his knees with the promise that if a whole day of that didn't knock all the stubbornness out of him, the stick would be applied again; and when Michael got down upon his knees he began to think the matter over.

"Is it true," he asked some time later, "that Mr. Liton made a school of his own out of the monastery on the hill?"

"Sure it's true," answered Louis.

"How do you know?"

"Don't you believe me?"

"I do believe you, but I want to know how you know."

"I know, you take it from me."

Michael was going to ask whether Louis knew how to get there, but he thought it better not to. That night another ghost slid down a cottage wall, and disappeared in the woods, with only the greater part of his plan working, for he had heard the grind of the watchman's shoes upon the gravel, before he could locate and don all the clothes that he had successfully hidden. He found himself without shoes and without his cap, dashing somewhere through the icy woods.

It was a still night in the early part of spring. The ground was hard and covered here and there with small patches of snow. The brooks were all frozen. He ran hopping through the woods till he was far enough from the school grounds, then turned and took a western direction, going down

the side of Abolt Hill into the valley towards Abolt village. His knees were stiff, the soles of his feet received dig after dig, and his hands were all scratched up, but never did he think of either or slacken his pace, save when suddenly he heard the barking of a dog too near, or the stirring of something before or behind him. Once, just as he approached a path, he heard some one, apparently drunk, talking to himself, and struggling up the hill. But the man soon passed him, and when his heart grew quiet enough for him to catch a deep breath, he went on again.

In that way he came near the village, and took a roundabout way to avoid running across a villager who might be aware of the five dollars in store for any one who caught an Abolt School runaway; but as soon as he lost the village, he became uncertain of his way and stopped to think and cry.

Finally, thinking he distinguished the hill he wanted from those about it, he dashed into the strip of woodland that lay before him, and came upon a frozen brook. There were no bridges about, and being unable to do anything else, he attempted to cross it. He was within a few feet of the other end, and just as he lifted a blood-stained, stockinged foot to step upon a rotten log, he saw a figure like that of the Colonel. There, a few rods before him among a cluster of dark green trees, stood the Colonel in his deep blue uniform and white gloves. The boy fell upon his face in fright.

It was some time before he could look up again, and when he did, his heart fairly jumping out of him, and his limbs shaking violently, he saw the Colonel standing motionless, in the same position.

He looked sharply. Was it possible? The figure seemed too quiet to be real, but he was afraid of it and slowly crawled away, watching it as he went, until he was out of its reach; then he started upon a run for his life.

Luckily the apparition, being made of wood and two small patches of snow, could not run after him, though he did think he heard it behind him more than once in his horrible flight.

Over and over, again and again, he ran his toes against a stone, the stump of a tree, or a bit of ice, stumbling, rising, running or limping on; and, finally, admonishing himself with bitter tears for having made such a foolish, hopeless attempt and for not having remained and served his time. His mind was being wrecked by the fear of discovery, the terror of meeting a man, a policeman, or a mean dog, the possibility of Mr. Liton's being unable to save him, or his own inability to find Mr. Liton's school. At last he came upon a path which he felt sure must lead to the top of the western hill, and sending all his cares to oblivion, he madly struggled upwards.

But the pathway seemed endless. Up a little knob and down its other side! One time he came to a point where his way branched off into two paths and one seemed as good as the other. He took one of them and ran along, only to find himself going downwards. He cried bitterly and retraced his steps till he came to the fork again, and there took the other path.

It was half past two in the morning, three hours after he had slidden down the rope from his cottage window, when he came out of the woods into an opening on the hilltop and saw before him the dark

old monastery with its two towers peacefully sleeping in the dead of the quiet starlit night.

He picked up another path that led him to a two-story shed-like building and into a sort of garden or court yard. Here a pebbled walk led to a small open veranda. He mounted the few steps leading to it, very cautiously, dreading the awakening of some dog or watchman, and nervously knocked on the solid old door.

This seemed to be the worst part of the whole undertaking, and he shook and shivered, and cursed the whole world.

The sound he made with his knuckles echoed on the hilltop and against the two-story shed, slightly disturbed the night and sank into a dead terrifying silence again. No answer.

He cried more bitterly and shook and shivered more, then rapped again, and again the night took up the sound.

Suddenly a window opened on the second floor a girl's head with hair streaming down loosely, popped out and a voice softly demanded an explanation.

"Is this Mr. Liton's school?" he asked her, sobbing, and she answered affirmatively.

"Please tell Mr. Liton to come down right away; I want to see him."

"All right, I'll call him right away," she replied, and her voice was the sweetest sound that his battling little soul had ever heard in all its struggling existence.

The big door flew open and the light streamed out upon a wild-looking youngster in rags. His hair was uncombed and in knots, his eyes stared in

terror, fairly bulging out of his head, his hands were covered with blood, his stockings were ripped into shreds, and his feet were black and blue and swollen.

"Please take me in, Mr. Liton," he cried, "I am Michael from Abolt School. I ran away. I will work for you all my life, if you help me now."

"Marguerite," said Mr. Liton softly, "run up into the tower like a good girl and fix up the cot. Get some hot water ready."

Marguerite rushed up the stairs as fast as she could go, while Mr. Liton took the protesting runaway in his arms and carried him.

"I can walk, Mr. Liton, please don't carry me."

"Oh, no! You musn't walk on those feet. I can carry you."

"Will you keep me here, Mr. Liton? Please don't let them take me back. I'll kill myself if they take me back."

"No, I won't let them take you back. You are going to stay right here with us, Michael. You will be one of my boys and work with the rest of us. I am very glad you came to me."

"I will work for you all my life," insisted Michael, and his tears fell faster than ever.

They reached the bathroom on the second floor, and Michael was seated on a chair where he could keep his feet from touching the floor. Marguerite brought everything that Mr. Liton had called for; then she went up into the tower room and sat there waiting for them, until Mr. Liton came up with the renovated Michael, who was placed upon the clean blankets of the cot. His hands and feet were bandaged and when everything that could be done for him had been done, and Mr. Liton and Mar-

guerite were about to return to their beds, Michael begged them not to leave him alone.

"I know," he cried, "they're after me."

"You foolish boy," said Mr. Liton, "the doors are all locked. No one can come in here. But I will stay with you. Marguerite, you might as well go to bed."

"I'd rather stay up with you," said Marguerite, "I couldn't sleep any more, anyway."

Mr. Liton brought in two rockers and he and Marguerite sat down near the cot and read. Michael lay for a few moments staring around the wonderful room in which he found himself. Two of the walls were all window and one was all door. Strange pictures hung upon the fourth wall and a stranger instrument stood in a corner.

Michael continued staring until his eyelids grew heavy, then, forgetting the world with all the horror he had experienced in it, he fell asleep to dream of fairyland, for the first time in all his life.

END OF BOOK ONE

*Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds
Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law
Of mild equality and peace, succeeds
To faiths which long have held the world in awe,
Bloody and false and cold.*

—PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.



BOOK TWO

CHAPTER I

A VISION

The twelve o'clock train from Chicago and the West pulled into the smoky station of the metropolis on a hot July day, and but slightly stirred the multitudinous inhabitants of the great ant-hill. Of the individuals that had been gliding about, since eternity began it seemed, some quickened their paces and gathered about the sombre corridor with its iron gate-way, fanning, blowing, bustling, and waiting. The awe-inspiring locomotive, with its mysteriously built cab and its especially long train of cars, dusty, squeaky, and dark, pulled up to the very end of the track without revealing a single individual of the many it had brought. Of a sudden, the doors of each car were opened, and a shower of men, women and children followed. One after another, and often a dozen at a time, poured out for many minutes without exhausting the stream. Many of them rushed eagerly because of those who were anxiously waiting for them, and others because they feared the night in a great city and wished to have time enough to make the necessary arrangements by daylight; but some took their time. None waiting for them, apparently familiar with the city they had just come to, they waited until the largest part of the crowd was ahead of them, then followed into the waiting room.

Among those who took their time, walked a young woman of about thirty-five. She wore a white waist and a neat gray skirt, and carried a suit-case and a rain-coat. Beneath a very simple straw hat was revealed the face of a strong personality, and as little as was possible of her already gray hair. She bore the expression of one who had suffered intensely, and had come out of each ordeal more able to bear than before; but traces of these ordeals were visibly playing about her still fair and resolute features.

She walked to the parcels desk and left her suit-case, then turned and swung into the stream that poured out of the exits.

"Think of it! Three years since I last saw this!" she muttered to herself with a sigh, as she came upon a corner that she had seen an infinite number of times before those three years began their distant course,—then walked on with the city's unwearied.

On trolley cars and off she went from street to street, from friend and acquaintance to friend and acquaintance, till the desired information was given; then returned to the same station and boarded a local train. One hour of travel over scenes painfully familiar, and she came to a country station and alighted.

There were the velvet green lawns and flowers and white-washed stones, the villagers' cottages, the hotel, the post office and grocery store. Towards the left she could see ascending woods and beyond that she could see in her memory a miniature plateau with rows of cottages and pebbled walks, and

towards the right a hill was in sight, and on its summit two living towers.

A charming country road, shaded by drooping willow trees, curving, rising and falling with delightful grace, led to that hill with its fascinating towers. This road she took.

About three-quarters of a mile outside of the village a pathway wound down the hillside to the road. This path she recognized by the richly laden apple tree which stood a few feet up the side of the hill and sent its gnarled roots to sew together the broken greenish brown. She knew that some distance up was a very shady spot, and hastened toward it; for the day was very hot and her limbs had been cramped so long. She sat there for a few minutes, looked for the initials and the names that had been carved on different tree-trunks; then the desire to get to her destination forced her to hurry on till she saw a little ahead of her what once was a monastery.

She came upon a garden. A long and wide stretch of potatoes on one side and on the other perfect rows of perfect cabbages, and beyond that corn. A number of boys were busy hoeing among the high stalks, and did not notice her. She approached the building with the towers. A beautiful lawn with flower beds surrounded it, and its walls, save where there were windows, were covered with vines. The towers alone showed its clean shingly covered sides.

The large porch that she remembered gloomy and weed o'er-grown, was well shaded and neatly painted, and the three hammocks and many rockers on its floor were most solicitous. She walked up the

few steps leading to it very cautiously, and looked about for the door bell. The doors were wide open, and the few times she rang the bell her ringing was unanswered. At the opposite end of the spacious hallway was another door, and it, too, was wide open. She entered the hallway, thinking that some one might be found in the court yard. The hallway was very beautifully ornamented with photographs in sepia, of the scenery about the hill, framed in home-made mission picture frames, with a number of wooden hatracks, with several very neat little hall tables, under light bulbs, and with light green clay jardinières, holding wide-leafed plants, some of which rose high enough to reach the moulding. A large desk and three very long leather-cushioned seats made up the furniture of this large corridor, and were neatly arranged about the several open doors and the stairway. She slowly walked the entire length of the hall floor and came to a point where she could look over the entire court yard. It consisted, first, of a cement floor connected with the back porch and a number of wooden steps, and beyond that a rather wide lawn, with pebbled walks, flower beds, and a number of large trees, between several pairs of which hung red and tan hammocks. One of these was occupied by a stout lady, enjoying her afternoon nap.

The pathway in the center wound about a two-story shop and out again upon a large athletic field, one corner of which had been turned into a tennis court, where half a dozen girls were playing tennis.

She watched them for a few minutes, then turned and retraced her steps, expecting to take a seat on the front porch and to wait until some one

could be found to speak to; but on her way back she found the sleeping lady awakened and rubbing the half sleepy eyes of her good-natured face.

"This is Mr. Liton's school, is it not?"

"Yes. You wish to see Mr. Liton?"

"Yes, I would like to."

"Can you wait a few minutes? I expect them home any minute now. They come in about this time every day for a swim."

"I have plenty of time. I can wait."

"Will you have a rocker or that hammock?" asked the lady of the house very politely. "I think the hammock is much more comfortable, and you look tired. Take off your hat and make yourself at home. It has been very hot, hasn't it?"

She sat down upon the hammock as one would upon a chair, and continued looking at and admiring this motherly woman, whoever she may have been.

"There they come now," said the lady, rising. "I didn't think they were coming so soon. It's time to ring the bell."

She walked up on the little porch and pulled a rope that hung alongside of the wall, nearly hidden by the vines that crept over it. A great bell sounded once, twice, three times over the hill. Immediately the tennis players, in girl fashion, armed and in groups, left their court and made for the house. From the cornfield came three of the boys, while Mr. Liton and a crowd of other boys came from another field. All of them rushed up the stairways to their different rooms and substituted bathing-suits for the clothes they had been wearing. Even Mother Atkins and her husband, the most good-

natured couple that ever breathed, went to their rooms to put their suits on. Mr. Roland, too, went for his room, while Mr. Liton, who was informed of a visitor, went into the court yard with his overalls on and his shirt sleeves rolled up.

"How do you do?" he said politely, but when the young woman turned to greet him, a smile spread all over his face, both his hands stretched out to grasp hers, and shaking his head, he went on: "Well, well, well! Is this a hallucination, or are you really before me?"

"As far as I'm aware," she answered softly, turning her head slightly, "I think I am quite real. There *are* times when I am uncertain."

"Rolan, Rolan, hurry down here."

Several boys peeped out of their respective windows. Then Rolan's face was seen.

"Hello, the idea!" he cried, pulled his head in, replaced his clothes, and was soon running down the stairway.

He shook her hand long and fervently. "How are you? How are you, and how is Miss Cane?"

"Miss Cane is all right, now, for all time, I guess."

"What do you mean?"

"Poor Nida died just about a year ago."

"And you people never wrote to us," said Liton, with a sorrowful expression on his face.

"Really, do not blame me. I shall explain in every detail—everything that happened, and you will then understand."

"Died of consumption, did she?" Rolan asked, almost sobbing.

"Yes."

"Poor, poor girl," cried Liton, "she was a martyr, if ever there was one."

"Oh, how she suffered! I feel it less terribly now, but oh, it is such a horrible death," went on Miss Britter with a far away look in her eyes. "She spoke to me until nearly the end, but during her last few days she was a little confused. She never stopped talking of Abolt and the boys, and the last minute she must have been thinking of little Ludwig—she mentioned his name several times. It was terrible, let's try to forget it."

They were quiet for a few minutes, then Mr. Liton spoke, "We have several of the boys that you know, here."

"Who are they? How did you come to get them?"

"I got on the right side of one of the judges of the Children's Court by inviting him out here and giving him a good time. Of course when he saw the place he said he wished he could send all the children here that come before him, and now whenever I want any particular boy, I just speak to him about it. You know Michael Roate, don't you?"

"Yes, sure."

"Well, Michael ran away from Abolt about a year after we left, and Judge Willis refused to let Krammer take him back. Oh, we had quite a time. Krammer, Reilly, an awful-looking new principal, and Miss Brand came to court to testify. I had Michael with me, and together we told the court a few things, and Krammer left like a whipped dog."

"I can imagine how he looked. Did he turn pale?"

"Pale," cried Rolan, "you couldn't tell where his collar ended."

"He was so mad," went on Liton, "he almost fainted; and I heard from no gossipers either, that he promised to get good and even with me. So far, however, the only deal between him and me, was when I took Ernest and Jack away from him."

"Are they here, too?"

The bathers began to pour down into the court yard. Twenty well-developed, good-looking boys, with their sunburnt arms and shoulders exposed, Mother and Mr. Atkins, and seven girls. Some were well-developed and beautiful as only girlhood and boyhood can be, but a few of the newcomers were still faintly marked with the stigma of the street.

They all started on a run for the swimming pool, while the three Abolt boys, who recognized Miss Britter, came up to greet her.

"What big boys you have grown to be," said Miss Britter, "you are almost men now."

The boys fairly jumped about her with delight, they were so glad to see her. They talked of Abolt School, telling unrestrainedly what they thought about the different officers there, and describing in detail, their different escapes.

"Are you going to stay here?" asked Michael, feeling that it was wrong for them to keep talking to Miss Britter so long, when Mr. Rolan and Mr. Liton hadn't seen her for so many years.

Mr. Liton answered for her, "Yes, Miss Britter is going to stay and work with us."

Miss Britter smiled.

"Well, then we will be able to see more of you."

said Michael again, and started off for the swimming pool.

"Is Miss Cane coming, too?" asked Jack, stopping for a minute.

"Miss Cane can never come here, Jack. She died last year."

Jack said nothing, but his eyes were quickly moistened, and with the other two young men, he walked away, very slowly. Miss Cane had been his favorite teacher and his childish ideal of a woman, and among the many things he hoped to do when he grew up to be a man was to be a real friend of Miss Cane, not a boy friend; and he, on the other hand, had been her favorite. Didn't she buy him a beautiful pair of fur gloves, and didn't she buy him a sled? The sled and the gloves had long been destroyed, but the feeling that had accompanied those lifeless things was destined to live as long as Jack's heart beat and to grow in intensity as the meaning of life became clearer to him.

"I want to ask so many things," began Miss Britter, after they had had something to say about Jack and his relations to Miss Cane.

"You knew, of course, that we started this school, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes," Miss Britter replied, trying hard to resist her desire to sleep, "I received the letter you sent me just after you had your plans laid out."

"Really," began Rolan, "you look as though you need a bed much more than you do this information."

"I am terribly sleepy. I don't think I have had a night's sleep this week."

"Well, you go right up, take a warm bath and go to bed. Are you hungry?"

"Couldn't eat a thing if I tried."

"I'm sorry I didn't ask Marguerite to stay and help you."

"Oh, no. I'm glad you didn't. Just show me where things are; I'll help myself."

"She wouldn't mind. She's a lovely girl. She'd be glad to help you."

"Oh, I think this is the dearest place I have ever been in. I wish I weren't so sleepy. You must give me a job. I won't leave if you want me to."

"I think this belongs to you as much as it does to anybody else," said Liton, "but now go on and attend to yourself."

An elderly man came sauntering along through the hallway, stopped at the back door and looked out over the court yard.

"Who's that?"

"That is our music teacher, Mr. Munsen. He can teach violin, piano and cello. And he plays all of them beautifully."

"Aren't you going for a swim, Mr. Munsen," called out Rolan.

"Maybe I will," came back, with a slight German accent.

"He always answers that way—'Maybe I will,'" whispered Liton, "but he is a lovely old man."

"Do come."

"I'd like to have you meet a friend of ours and our school," said Liton again, addressing himself to the old musician. "She used to be the principal at Abolt when we were there."

"Oh, in that horrible place." Mr. Munsen came towards them and very courteously took off his panama, and shook her hand very warmly. "Yes, yes, I am very glad to meet you. A friend of this school will always be a friend of mine."

"Mr. Munsen has already, in the two years that he has been here developed a quartette, and they are doing beautifully. He loves children, and is a splendid violinist. Just wait till you hear him."

Mr. Munsen, a little stout, with a very good-natured, but always serious-looking, reddish face, perspiring considerably, took the praise as a matter of course, feeling that it was all due him, excused himself, and went to prepare for the swimming pool.

Miss Britter was shown the reflecting room in the tower and had matters arranged for her there, then shown one of the three white lovely bathrooms, and left to herself. Mr. Liton and Mr. Rolan followed the music teacher to the swimming pool.

"Oh, this poor, poor world," cried Miss Britter to herself, while examining everything in the small white tiled room. "How healthy and happy we could all be. Why shouldn't we all be happy? Why should the miserable necessities keep so many of us away from our happiness? Had poor Nida had all this she would still be living." She thought of consumptive Nida's starving and cried.

Through with her bath and feeling free from the dust and soot of so many miles of traveling, she climbed the neat stairway to the reflecting room in the tower.

If ever there was a room equipped for resting purposes, this one was. Two of its four walls were

made of interlocking windows, and one was almost all door, leading to a very narrow balcony, from which the juvenile astronomers watched their stars. A telescope fixed in its stand, stood against a corner, and in a small cabinet near it, were filed many maps and charts of the heavens. On the solid wall and in the two or three wooden spaces between the windows of the other walls, hung colored astronomical prints and one dreamy landscape, in home-made mission frames, to match the dark green mission woodwork.

Miss Britter stood for a few moments after examining the room and gazed longingly down the valley. Then, pulling the shutters to, she turned the couch so that when lying on it, she could see the landscape, fell upon it, and gave way to deep slumber.

CHAPTER II

THE VISION UNFOLDS ITS REALITY

She opened her eyes again. What had awakened her, she did not know. But it came again. A sound of music, a start and a sudden stop. Mr. Munsen was practicing with his quartette. At times the strings sounded crude, at others they were divine. They would sing out in harmony, and a mistake would stop them. There were the pictures on the wall, the dreamy landscape, and the shepherd with his sheep; the strangely colored, fiery worlds floating about in mysterious space, intensely blue. There were the windows and the door, and upon everything the spell of music, of evening, and of nature, with its scent of flowers; feelings and sensations of sadness and beauty, of the tragedy of human existence—feelings experienced by those who have lived, seen, felt and suffered, who fall asleep and awake into the quietude of an early evening. She lay that way for some time. Thoughts serged in and out of her consciousness. Dream upon dream, and recollection after recollection lit up and died away like the flashes of a lighthouse to the sea-weary voyager; and a great soul-desire possessed her.

A rap on the door broke up her reverie.

A little girl of about seventeen, the oldest girl at the school, with a soft, delicate pink face and an exceptional amount of light brown hair, a mischievous expression playing about between two small dimples, and wearing a neatly pressed white apron and cap, came in.

"Supper will soon be ready, and I came to help you," she said, eyeing the strange woman.

"Sit down with me for just two minutes, will you, dear?"

She sat down upon the lower end of the couch.

"Have you been here long?"

"Yes, ma'm, very long. I was one of the first girls to come here."

"Your father and mother live in the city?"

"I have no father and mother. I lived with an aunt, but she mistreated me, and I ran away, and did other things I shouldn't have, and now I am here, and I hope I never have to go."

"Don't think of going, my dear."

"I like to go to the city sometimes, but I always come back very tired. I feel much better here. Are you going to stay with us?"

"I am not certain, dear, whether I shall or not. If I can I will."

"Mr. Liton says you will."

"Does he?" Miss Britter smiled.

"Oh, I'm sure you'll like it. It was hard for me at first—it used to seem so lonesome, no matter how many people were here, but now I think it's just the nicest place on earth. We have plenty to do and a great deal of fun too. You can't have any more than that in the city. We learn a lot here. We make our own clothes, and Mr. Munsen is teaching me to play the piano. Did you hear us practicing?"

"Yes. It is beautiful. I heard you play just as I woke up. I think it was the most beautiful sound I ever heard. What did you play?"

"We were just practicing. We played many things."

"What happy people you ought to be."

"We are. When I go back to the city and I remind myself of the terrible times I used to have at my aunt's, I begin to worry that something might happen, don't you know, that would send me back again to my aunt or let me go out to fight for myself."

"Musn't feel that way. Mr. Liton will never let any of you go out and be lost. Besides if you ever did go, you would have to fight as hard as you did have to before you came. You have a better education now. You can do many things you couldn't do before."

"I really am not afraid. I just think about it sometimes."

"I suppose we ought to go down now."

"Yes, please," said Marguerite, "I don't like to be late."

They prepared for supper quickly, and went down into the dining room, where the entire family was already gathered. Three boys, dressed in white coats and aprons, waited. There was not much to be done, for most of the food was already on the table. They helped by changing dishes when necessary, filling others when empty, and bringing the desert. A little table stood neatly spread near a window. This table was to be used by the waiters when through with their work, and they felt better towards their work, since they were to eat at a clean table when through. There were two large tables and sixteen chairs about each. Mr. Liton, Mr. Munsen, four of the girls and eight of the boys sat at one of the tables, and Mr. Rolan, Mr. and Mrs. Atkins and the rest of the boys and girls sat at the

other. Miss Britter was given a seat at Mr. Liton's table between Michael and Ernest, who sat near each other.

The dining room was very simply arranged. A number of prints hung on the walls. There were many windows and the room was very light. Both doors and windows were heavily screened, so that few, if any flies, could have been seen. Mother Atkins was very careful about that.

Big pitchers full of milk graced the middle and end of each table, and about them were platters full of tomatoes, lettuce, potatoes, beans, summer radishes, raw carrots, eggs, and plenty of good whole wheat bread and butter. The day's work and pleasure made everybody hungry and they ate a great deal. Almost everything on the table was eaten up and more was brought. The waiters walked about the room and saw to it that everybody had what he wanted.

The noise was immense for so small a room. There was talking and laughing, and on the part of the younger people, sometimes so loudly that Mr. Liton or Mother Atkins, or some of the older people were forced to call their attention, but never was an individual called upon. As soon as they were informed that there was too much noise the excited individual who was referred to, calmed down.

"Did you rest well?" asked Mr. Liton, addressing Miss Britter.

"Yes, thank you. I feel very much better now."

"What do you think of this place?"

Miss Britter shook her head. "I can't express

myself. It seems that you have here everything that Abolt lacked."

"That's been my mission."

The waiters took some of the dishes on the table out into the kitchen and came back with platters of large ears of corn.

"What do you think of our corn, Miss Britter?" asked Michael. "You never saw anything like it at Abolt, did you?"

"I don't think I have seen anything like it anywhere; at least not in such quantities."

"You ought to see the stuff the farmers grow down the hill," suggested Jack.

"We get ten ears to every one of theirs from the same amount of ground, and we get better looking ears and really don't have to work as hard."

The discussion on scientific agriculture was carried on at Mr. Liton's end of the table, while the rest of the boys and girls continued their laughter and noise, till the table was partially cleared and the desert was brought.

After supper the hammocks and outdoor rockers were in great demand. Every one was allowed to rest for half an hour, during which time the waiters ate their meal. Then Mother Atkins announced it time to clean up, and the smaller boys and the girls, having learned from experience that it was very necessary to go in at once, and only a very good excuse was accepted, made for the kitchen and dining room, and worked like beavers to get rid of the job as soon as possible. The girls washed the dishes and the boys dried them, and they were allowed to laugh and joke all they pleased so long as they continued working. In that way the unpleasant work

often became so interesting, that boys who were supposed to work at the barn often asked to be allowed to help in the kitchen. Duster, broom and dustpan were set in motion, and in a single hour the place was as clean as ever before.

The older boys with the men, made for the barns and garden. Some milked the cows, some fixed the barns up for the night, and the rest went out into the garden, weeding and hoeing, for only in the high cornfield could one hoe comfortably on hot sunny days. When the people in the house and in the barn were through with their work, the fellows out in the garden were called in by the ringing of the bell, and every one washed and put on clean comfortable clothes.

"They have looked forward to this night for some time," Mr. Liton told Miss Britter, "we have a party to-night. This takes place every two weeks. The girls bake a great many things, make chocolate, or lemonade when its warm, and we spend most of the evening and part of the night near the swimming pool. Mr. Munsen takes his violin and plays for us out doors."

"What wonder that these children love this place."

"Well, I'll tell you, Miss Britter. I figure this way. The great struggle of the race is all for happiness. When we get to the point where we are certain we shall never again be happy, we commit suicide. I can't make these people love this place by making life for them one grand sermon on what is right or wrong, that is certain. I'm going to do all I possibly can to make them happy, and so long as I do that they'll love this place and not only that,

but they will believe in me, and my teaching will make impressions. You can't get away from the fact that pleasure is all that all of us seek, in one form or another, but pleasure it is. Children aren't unreasonable. When they realize that I am really trying hard to make them happy, they won't refuse to be reasonable when I don't do just as they would like me to."

Many of the boys, acting like little Indians, gathered paper and wood and ran towards the swimming pool, screaming or singing as they ran. The girls carried the refreshments that they had made. Mr. Atkins carried a large kettle, together with the necessities for the making of lemonade, and some of the boys carried pails of water and glasses.

The swimming pool was a well-cemented, very large cellar, about as big as six ordinary sized cellars, three feet deep on one side and sloping to ten feet on the other. It was not far from the tennis court, and was nearly surrounded by shrubs and maple trees. A fence protected night prowlers from falling in, and a large sandy spot in front was used as a beach, upon which a camp fire could safely blaze away. A spring coming from a part of the hill higher up on one side fed the pool, and a buried drain-pipe emptied the water into a creek below when desired.

The camp fire lighted and the programme was planned. There were to be games, music and refreshments. For fully an hour the younger people played tag and other games, while the older ones sat about the camp fire singing.

Then Mr. Munsen played his violin, one of the violin solos that Miss Britter had heard so many

times in Mr. Staver's sitting-room at Abolt. Each note seemed to bring a recollection of its own. Definite pictures, of her office, the roadways, the cottages, the farm, the hills about Abolt, the valleys, the dilapidated house and the black cellar hole and its ruins, the boys, and Nida. These recollections brought sensations, and the sensations blended with a feeling of evening, of sparkling water, of the camp-fire and happy children, and music,—and she stared into the flames until the intense brightness of the red and yellow flooded her vision and she saw nothing definitely, every thing was turned to sound and color—the past and present broke into the elements of a dream.

Mr. Munsen played several numbers. Then refreshments were served and the real fun began. All the pranks of boyhood, all the sweet, alluring coquetries of innocent girlhood were revealed in the process of their merry-making; and, without sham or strain, with sincerity and keenest joy this little drama, acted under the clear summer night sky in the poetic light of their beloved bonfire, disclosed their guidance by a philosophy that all their elders well might strive to understand.

Mr. Munsen and Father and Mother Atkins soon after retired. Miss Britter, Mr. Rolan, and Mr. Liton went off to one side, where seated on rustic benches, they retraced the steps they had taken during the three years that preceded.

"Poor Nida," said Miss Britter, "a place like this would have saved her life."

"Why didn't you write?" Rolan asked impatiently.





"I don't know," she answered. "We felt that you had troubles enough of your own."

"It is purely a case of martyrdom," Liton suggested.

"There's no doubt about that. I told her doctor of the conditions at Abolt, of the bad food and the cold rooms and the endless worry and struggle, and he said that if we had left a few months earlier she would have been able to recover. You see we had so much trouble financially after we did leave. The railroad expenses were so great. It was so hard for me to get work, and when I did get it, it was impossible for me to give her the service that she required. For weeks I did my sleeping on a chair beside her. Oh, it was terrible!"

"Well, don't think about it any more," pleaded Liton.

"Tell me how you managed to accomplish all this," she began, anxious to do her share of dispelling the gloom that thoughts of the past had brought with them.

"In my second letter, which apparently you did not receive, I told you that I got hold of a very rich individual by the name of Mr. Storton, who gave me twenty thousand dollars to set things going. He's now in Europe, but will be back this fall and you can meet him. He's a very interesting character. But to come back to my story, we immediately got after the owner of this place and paid him five thousand for the buildings that you see and one hundred acres of land. We have fourteen cows and eight little calves; we have chickens and ducks, and raise garden truck. You will get to know the details as you stay here and work with us. We make all our

living expenses from the farm, and every now and then make more than enough to cover expenses. We also earn quite a little with woodworking and photography. We have a furniture dealer in Hilldale who buys our furniture and picture frames and photographic prints. He takes all we can give him. The first two years we lived on the twenty thousand dollars that we started with. At the end of those two years, after fixing this place up just as you see it, we had five thousand dollars left, and that I placed in a bank where it is drawing interest, and where it will not be touched unless we are in grave need."

"Do they earn anything for themselves?"

"Oh, yes. We started out with the idea that this is a commonwealth that is to be managed by its citizens. Each individual must find his or her place, and do his or her share of the necessary work. We feel that whoever does his share, whoever does all that he can do, is doing all that should be expected of him, and that nobody can do any more. Should anyone try to do less than that by shirking, every time he is convicted of that offence by a jury, he is fined whatever the jury thinks he should be fined and that is held against him. When the end of the year comes, and we have figured out the amount that we have earned above the amount that we have spent, and have decided upon how much shall be kept by the school and how much is due each of the individual workers, all who have worked during the entire year get the same amount; each individual must pay to the school out of his share, the sum of all his fines during the year."

The three older girls were huddled together in a group on one side of the fire, and the older boys, in

a similar group, sat opposite them on the other side of the fire. One group was trying to outdo the other in repartee and being generally witty. At a distance from them a number of boys were stretched on the sand, while the rest of the boys and girls sat about the water or played with their bare feet dangling in it.

"What have you for me to do here?"

"There'll be plenty for you to do. Don't you worry," said Rolan.

"Mother Atkins is a lovely woman, but the girls need an educated woman about them. That's the place you will fill."

"Tell me. Where did you get such a nice couple?"

"They were living on a farm that was heavily mortgaged. I happened to pass their place, 'twas only about three miles towards the left here, and stopped for a drink. After a few minutes of talking to them, I made up my mind that they were just the people I wanted. Mr. Atkins told me that there was a rumor that the mortgage on his place would be foreclosed, and I offered them the position they now have. They were delighted. You see they have a good home assured to them, and whatever we can afford to give them each year they are willing to take. They have no worries whatever, put a little into the bank, and since they like children, they have a great deal of pleasure. How many couples in this world get that much out of life?"

It was time to retire and everybody was so informed.

One by one and group by group they arose and stretched their limbs, looking very much like a brood of sleepy kittens just stirred.

It was somewhat cool. The girls put their arms around each other and the boys carried the pails, plates, and glasses.

The hallway, when they reached it through the court yard door, was lit up by a soft green light. Mother Atkins, her husband and Mr. Munsen were sound asleep.

Mr. Liton, Mr. Rolan, and the boys slept on the second floor, while the girls' bedrooms were on the floor above. Miss Britter was conducted to the little room that was to be hers, and when she was left there alone, the expressions of emotion that she had been forced to keep back, were let loose, and for sheer happiness, woman fashion, she cried.

Mr. Liton was the last one to retire. When he thought everybody was in bed he walked into the court yard, glanced over all the windows, the shop, and the gateway, stepped up to the wall, where the rope was held by strong vines and leaves, pulled the bell up as far as it could go, and dropped it. A thundering gong shook the air above the hill and woods, and softened into a rounded vibration like that of the string of a 'cello, and then weakened and was lost. Save for his careful steps along the hallway and up the wide staircase, not a sound was heard anywhere.

CHAPTER III

ONE DAY ON TOWER HILL

It was five o'clock next morning when the bell again called out over the hill, and announced that those who wished to take their morning swim should don their bathing suits and hurry down. Immediately following this announcement, noises were heard from all the boys' rooms, for no matter how strong was the desire to continue sleeping, they would rather have lost their breakfast than the morning dive. Some, still rubbing their eyes, and others stretching to dispel all traces of drowsiness, together with Mr. Liton and Mr. Rolan, dashed for the pool, each anxious to be the first to dive in.

Plunge after plunge, and splash after splash were heard at the house, and the yelling and screaming that accompanied each plunge and splash always awakened the girls, who persisted in sleeping on. The water was rather cold that morning, and very few did more than cross the pool two or three times before they emerged dripping, shivering and laughing, and circulating as fast as they could on the sandy track about the pool.

"It is five-thirty now, boys," said Mr. Liton. "We have a great deal of work to do to-day."

By the time they returned to the house the girls were already below and dressed, and before many more minutes were over all bathing suits were hanging on the line to dry, and Mother Atkins was trying very hard to get the stove into good working condition.

The boys were detailed to their respective work. Those who knew how, were given three cows each to milk, ten of the boys were to feed, clean and comb the horses, while the three smallest boys were asked to help Mother Atkins in the house.

"I feel like getting to work myself," said Miss Britter.

The sun had sent its light ahead of it, and then began climbing over a long row of trees, looking for all the world like a hedge around the earth. The air was clear, full of fragrance, and exhilarating. From the barn came shouting, whistling and singing, and the noise was often answered by farmer boys away below toward the east.

Breakfast was ready, and Marguerite asked Miss Britter to go with her to the barn and watch the boys who were still milking. The barn was on the slope of the hill on its western side and far enough below to keep from obstructing the view.

Most of the boys were through, and one was helping his friend, pulling away at the udders of the last cow, whose restlessness proved her dislike of the method.

"Can you milk, Miss Britter?" asked Ernest, as soon as he spied her, looking under the cow he was milking and towards the right of his helper. "I guess I wasn't cut out for milking cows."

"Who was cut out for it?" demanded George, a lanky individual with a long, pale face and light hair, neatly combed.

"It won't interfere with your genius, Ernest, take it from me," suggested Michael, who was sitting on a stone by himself peculiarly affected by the presence of the visitors.

Miss Britter looked at them admiringly. What a change had come upon both of them, since she had last seen them. Every feature of their faces, though apparently unchanged, showed the influence of a better outlook upon life and the approach to manhood.

"My dear sir," Ernest retorted, "it's very nice of you fellows to accuse me of genius, even though, coming as it does, it's more of an insult than a compliment. But who cares? 'Let me essay you, O Muse!'"

"Some more poetry, poetry!" some one shouted from the woodpile. "Get done with your milking, and do your luning by yourself."

"Cultured people, these," said Ernest, sarcastically, shaking his head in the direction of the crowd of boys, and addressing himself to Miss Britter.

"If that cow could only give poetry instead of milk," put in a little fellow, as he threw a stone over the trees into the woods, Ernest would be the first through."

"Stop all that fighting and bring your milk to the kitchen," cried Marguerite. "Everybody is waiting for you and breakfast will be cold."

Everything said was taken with a good grace and the milkmen made for the house with their milk.

Mother Atkins announced that breakfast was ready, and every one made for the dining room and took his or her place about the tables.

The sun broke right through the screen on the two big eastern windows, played on the floor, and danced about from one shining dish to another.

The three boys, whose turn it was to wait on the table that day, were there with their white coats and aprons, and helped wherever they could. A small dish of huckleberries, an individual small pitcher of cream, one or two glassfuls of milk, some summer radishes, boiled eggs, and plenty of bread and butter, constituted each one's breakfast; and the appetite they gained by the morning's work and exuberant air left very little uneaten.

Just as they were leaving the table, the truck peddler's voice was heard from without, and Mr. Liton went out, followed by most of the boys, to attend to him.

"Good morning," cried the peddler, "what have you got for me this morning?"

"Anything you want."

He then enumerated all the vegetables he wanted, and Mr. Liton called on all the boys to go for them.

The wagon was soon filled with several bushels of new potatoes, beets, lettuce, string beans, and a great deal of sweet corn. Everything salable was dug up and brought. This was every boy's sale, and each one was interested. The peddler was anxious to buy everything that was brought to him, it being so early in the season and so hard for the other peddlers to get all they wanted.

"Do you want any eggs?" asked George.

"Sure, how many you got?"

"We can let you have thirty dozen."

"Sure, come ahead."

The thirty dozen eggs were hardly on the wagon when one of the boys suggested, "You want some nice summer apples, don't you? Nice big yellow ones."

"Good and sweet?"

"Wait, I'll bring you some," said the little fellow, and ran off to get a specimen.

"Dandy," said the peddler, smacking his lips and winking a well protected eye. "How much can you pick me of those?"

"We have sixty trees full of those apples."

"Good, I'll take ten barrels a week from you, if you let 'em go cheap."

"We haven't anything cheap," said Mr. Liton. "They're good; you will have to give us what they're worth. We can get a number of dealers to take them all and do their own picking."

"I'll give you two-fifty apiece."

"No, you won't."

"For takin' ten barrels a week? I got to make something on them?"

"Shall we let him have them for two seventy-five?"

"Sure," cried the peddler. "They ain't worth more!"

It was decided that he be given them for two seventy-five a barrel, and the peddler rode off with his load.

Mr. Liton called Michael aside.

"Michael," he said, "I have a hundred and fifty dollars in cash and I want you to go to the city and deposit it."

"All right."

Michael went off to the village and the rest of the boys were detailed to the different work to be done that day. The potatoes were to be treated against a possible multiplication of a single potato bug discovered; the corn was to be hoed, and a con-

siderable amount of hay to be cut, raked and cocked. With Mr. Liton, Mr. Rolan, and Mr. Atkins in the lead, the different sized boys went to their appropriate jobs, and the girls began the house-cleaning, with Miss Britter, in spite of protests, glad to help.

The breakfast dishes were washed. Every room in the house was swept with a vacuum cleaner, and the whole place made spotless. When through, the girls were pretty tired, and Mother Atkins told them to go to the hammocks and rest until eleven o'clock.

"Let's go out and see them making hay, shall we?" asked Miss Britter.

"Sure, and take them something to drink."

"Where is Gabriel?" asked Bessie, a stout, stubby girl of about fifteen, looking at Marguerite and making her blush and protest.

"He's gone to the village to-day. Evangeline's heart is not on making ale for the haymakers. 'Gabriel is gone!'"

"They're all Gabriels to me," she replied, deciding that that was a much better attitude to take.

Marguerite and Bessie, one on each side of Miss Britter, were seated on the hammock, while the other five girls sat near them on the grass.

Bessie was a very serious little girl of fifteen, who looked more like a woman of fifty. She was the last one brought to Tower Hill, but had in the short year that she had been there acquired a few good habits, a little youth, and a reddish tint in her cheeks. She was picked up, a little mother to two tiny baby sisters, keeping house and earning money at the same time. Her little sisters were taken to an orphan asylum and she herself was brought to Tower Hill. She was quickly outgrowing the evil stunting

effects of her former environment, and gaining the attitude of healthy youth, which she had so unfairly been forced to pass over; but there were still occasional moments when the fear of being forced to return to her former existence worried her, and at those times she would fall back into the stupid look of the slum mother, but always the brighter expression would conquer at the sound of the childish mirth on the part of her happier playmates.

Of the other five seated on the grass, Consuelo interested Miss Britter most. She was rather dark, the type of a Spanish beauty. Her mother had danced her life away on the stage, and her father found more profit in her early walking the street than in his own labor, and so took the advantage, until she was arrested and sent to an institution for wayward girls. At this institution her life was made miserable. They had taken a swell-dressed little songbird from her fast existence, full of excitement, and during six months of slavery attempted to train her in the profession of house servant. Her rebellion brought her into heavy trouble, and she sought to get the best of the world by committing suicide. She was saved for the first time in her life, from (as she had often said herself) the best thing she had ever attempted to do. The judge, who took an interest in her, told her story to Mr. Liton, and asked whether he would take her. Mr. Liton found her a great study and very hard to influence. She had become a cynic, and to her there was nothing in life worth living for; but Mr. Liton had managed to get at Maguerite's inherent goodness, and through her, accomplished what had

never been accomplished in Consuelo before. She did like Marguerite.

Consuelo sat admiring Miss Britter; there was something about her she liked. Miss Britter, on the other hand, for the time being, worried about the cynical expression that never left the slightly shut magical eyes and her tender little mouth, closed tight.

Near Consuelo, in a sleeping posture, with her cheek on her right arm and her eyes open and directed upon Miss Britter, lay Sarah, a girl of fourteen. She had innocently followed her widowed mother in the art of shoplifting. Whatever her vices and shortcomings generally might have been, one virtue she possessed. She was immaculate. Everything about her was perfectly clean and neat, and her round, plumb little face beamed with a controlled mirth and mischievousness.

Minnie, Louisa and Julia were three little sisters, whose home it was said was incapable of proper guardianship, and who took to Tower Hill very warmly. Mother Atkins worshipped them; they were her babies, and in turn, worshipped her. These girls were the first to be interested in making a drink for the haymakers. They rushed into the house and prevailed upon Mother Atkins to give them the necessary number of lemons and amount of sugar.

Miss Britter started up, and the rest followed. The lemonade was made in two large milk pails, and they started for the fields, four of the girls carrying the two pails, and the rest of them each a glass.

"Let's go by the corn field," said Marguerite. "Some of the boys are hoeing there."

Nine of the smaller boys were hidden among the leaves of the cornstalks, making their way down the field, each at one row and all working together, that they might talk with Mr. Rolan, whose head alone was visible, and by which they were located. At sight of the milk pails they set up a howl and crowded about the welcome guests.

"You fellows here, can have only three-quarters of one pailful," cried Bessie threateningly, holding down the lid of the pail she was in charge of with both hands.

"I want only one glass," said Foxy Willie, admonishingly, adding, after she had allowed him to take one glassful, "at a time."

Sarah, who admired Willie at all times, was especially delighted with this exhibition of wit, and laughed heartily, while Bessie, in her usual mother-like manner, went on, "Is that so? Well, yes, if your three-quarters is not all gone after you have all had one glassful."

Luckily the three-quarters were not gone, and like all the others, he was given a second glassful, which he took, bowing with gratitude, and incidentally pleasing Sarah more than ever.

On the hayfield they came upon Mr. Atkins, driving his team of heavy horses hitched to a mower, which filled the air with the inspiring sound of the blades as they rapidly flew in and out among their iron fingers, cutting down the thick fragrant clover. A strong boy, called Brown, sat on the seat of the rake and sang at the top of his voice, driving a big bony horse, and with the power of his right leg, lifted and let fall the rakes behind him, gathering the dry hay into long rolls. Away at the other end

of the field, they could see Mr. Liton with some eight boys, all armed with forks, breaking up these rolls and piling the hay into cocks.

They served Mr. Atkins and Brown and started for the rest of the workers. How thirsty those boys were! They actually fell upon the pails, and with fervent apologies, strove to atone for their bad actions while committing them, and the lemonade, against all the protests the girls could make, went at a most fearful rate. It was by sheer force that Marguerite saved Mr. Liton's portion. She grabbed the pail and ran with it, and when she was out of reach, started back slowly, informing them that Mr. Liton hadn't had any yet, and thereby most magically checking them.

They went on making haycocks, thanking the girls for their kindness as they worked, and invited them pleadingly to call again.

Consuelo selected a very dry and interesting haycock, and after making sure that there were no field mice there, fell upon it with the remark, "This is fine, I'm going to sleep."

Some of the other girls followed, and began to shove each other about in an attempt to get the best place. Finally they compromised by giving Miss Britter the highest part of the pile.

The three little sisters and Sarah began to play, "Pussy wants a corner" among the many other haycocks.

"I could just sleep my life away like this," said Consuelo, instinctively drawing nearer to Miss Britter.

"Oh, no you wouldn't," said Miss Britter, "I'm sure you wouldn't. In a single day you would get

tired of it and would want to run off and stretch."

"You get tired of everything," she answered philosophically.

"Yes, if you don't do them the right way. If you set your heart on something within a few feet of you or so far away that there is no hope of ever reaching it, you get tired of everything, but if you make up your mind to get at things that are great and attainable, I mean things that it is possible for you to accomplish and that will not only give you joy but those about you as well, you never get tired of doing that. You get more pleasure from that kind of work each day."

"I think there is great pleasure in helping other people," said Marguerite. "I know that the two or three good things I have done to other people, have made me happier than all the other things I have done in all my life."

"Oh, how tired you'd get trying to help people," insisted Consuelo, "there are so many that need help."

"If everybody did his share, there wouldn't be so many."

"But," cried Bessie, who seemed to have been asleep, "that's just what we have to do, as Mr. Liton said so many times. We must try to make the world better, so much better that there won't be anybody to need help."

"Mother Atkins is calling us," cried Minnie, stopping the game.

Mother Atkins was leaning out over the narrow balcony of one of the towers, waving her handkerchief.

"I suppose," said Consuelo, jumping up in response, and smiling, "you're all right."

"Look how beautifully you play the piano," said Marguerite, paying no attention to her last remark.

"What help my piano playing would be to the world. I suppose if I worked very hard I would be able to stun the world with my genius."

"I firmly believe that you could become a very great player," said Miss Britter, "if you wanted to badly enough!"

"Come quickly, girls," said Mother Atkins when they reached the house. "What will the boys say if we won't have dinner ready for them when they come?"

Aprons dashed over dresses, and the kitchen was soon filled with the sounds of voices, the sizzling of frying-pans, the clanking of dishes, and with these sounds, the rising of vapors. The four smallest girls were sent to the strawberry patch to fill a number of wooden boxes with all the berries they could pick. Miss Britter, with Marguerite and Consuelo, then started to fix the dining room. The window blinds were sent up as far as they could go, every bit of furniture was carefully dusted, the tables were set, and the conversation was continued.

"You may ring the bell, now," said Mother Atkins an hour later, when they were ready.

Bessie pulled the rope hard and long. Glad shouts were soon heard—the youngsters were coming home.

On the ground floor of the shop, they had built a long, rather high bench, and on this stood numerous enamel wash dishes. Above each of these, on the wall, hung a towel, a looking glass, and an oil-

cloth bag, containing a small brush and comb. All the boys piled into the room, yelling, talking, laughing, or arguing, and the four little girls, glad to see them, stood in the doorway.

After dinner, some of the boys fell upon the lawn to rest. Some got after the day's newspaper, some read letters that they had received, some read books, while some appropriated the hammocks. When their food had been given a chance to digest, they were given permission to go swimming.

"When you hear the bell ring," said Mr. Liton, "come back quickly, will you? I want you to go with me and take a few interesting pictures in the hayfield. You will put on your overalls and straw hats, those sombreros that you wore this morning, and anything else that will make you look like real farmers."

Nothing pleased the boys more than picture-taking excursions, save perhaps going for a swim, so that after having put their bathing suits on, they dashed away to the pool, jumping and turning somersaults, intoxicated with delight.

"I'm going for a swim myself, Liton, aren't you?" said Rolan.

"No, I'd rather not just now. I want to show Miss Britter about the place."

Mr. Rolan went for his swim, while Miss Britter and Mr. Liton walked up to the second floor of the two-story shop building, and into a large room, occupied by a dozen benches, surrounded by pieces of unfinished furniture and all manner of shapes and sizes and grades of boards. "You ought to see this place when the boys are at work. The banging away

of their hammers, the sawing and scraping and pounding is music to me."

He then took her to a room back of the shop that was almost filled with furniture that the boys had made, and that needed but little further fixing up to be ready for the furniture dealer.

From there they went to the mysterious-looking metal room, with its many charcoal and gas burners, its tools and work benches, and above all, the dark stains on the walls and windows.

"When does your school open?"

"Our school opens as soon as we are through with the farm work."

"A boy or girl going through this school," said Miss Britter, "ought to be able to get along in the world."

"Yes, I think they will be able to get along especially well. Although they are taught definite work, the aim in the teaching is not to make professionals or tradesmen, but all-around, capable moral men and women, who will be able to meet the requirements of the world when they return to it. Some will remain farmers, and others will go to photography or office work, but all will be able to use their brains and their hands."

They entered a medium-sized room, in which were several long, plain wooden tables. Two doors led to two other rooms. One of the other rooms had a skylight and was fixed up as a photographic studio; the other was the dark room.

"What is this room used for?"

"For finishing their prints, and the girls take their sewing lessons here."

The studio was a very neat little room, with curtains and draperies of every shade and color. There were a few artistically shaped chairs and stools, a platform, a movable fireplace, a large camera and stand, and a number of other strange-looking objects. The dark room was clean and airy, with long shallow basins along the length of two of the walls, over them were faucets, and from under them a number of leaden pipes broke through the floor to carry off the surplus water. A number of washing machines, drying racks, trays, plate-boxes, and a vast host of large and small bottles, were crowded on shelves and in corners.

"We did much more picture-taking last summer than this."

"Why?"

"We have so many already. We have made use of a great number ourselves, and have won prizes for quite a few of them. You see the dealer can usually sell some pictures much more easily than others. There are about twenty large prints that seem to be popularly liked in Hilledale, and since he keeps asking for them, and since we can make as many prints as we like from the same plates, we just save time by not taking any more for selling purposes. If we get an interesting idea we go out. To-day I expect to take something nice in the hay-field."

"They like to take pictures?"

"Just wild about it."

"I must learn to take pictures, myself."

"Any time that you wish to."

"What have you in the second tower?" Miss

Britter asked when they were in the court yard again. "That has been worrying me."

"The second tower, if you please, is my sanctum sanctorum. There lie documents of infinite value to me. There I have my diary, which I have kept since this school was opened."

"When may I take a peep up there?"

"After you have been here for a few months; when you have made up your mind as to the character of each of them, you may go up there, lock yourself up, and see what I have had to say about them. There you will learn what a struggle it has all been. How I have had to work to develop the different personalities you see walking about and doing their work. There you will read about my temporary failures and final victories—the disappointments I have suffered and the rewards I have enjoyed."

"Can't I even look in there, now?"

"You can look into the room, if you want to, but there is nothing of interest in the room itself. It is exactly like the room in the other tower, only that instead of a couch I have a desk, instead of the telescope, I have a typewriter, and instead of pictures of the planets I have photographs of children."

The bell rang. The bathers returned, rushed up the stairway and into their rooms, and soon after came down again, dressed in their overalls and wearing their large-brimmed straw hats, each boy and girl carrying his or her own little camera.

It was four o'clock when they returned from the hayfield. The cameras and the exposed plates and films were left in the photographic dark room to

be developed next day, and then everyone returned to his work. Mr. Rolan, with his set of boys, made for the potato patches, while Mr. Liton, Mr. Atkins, and their sets of boys went back to making hay. Mother Atkins, Miss Britter and the girls had remained at home to finish their work. When the boys returned to the house to put their cameras away the girls were out on the lawn playing tennis. In an attempt to teach Miss Britter a certain stroke, Marguerite stretched too far and tore some part of her dress. She started at once for her room to fix it. Mother Atkins was sound asleep in her hammock, and she stepped lightly when she passed her. There was not a sound in the entire house when she entered, and a peculiar feeling came over her as her steps, light as they were, creaked upon the stairway.

Michael arrived at Abolt on the three o'clock train. A number of people about the station greeted him, but he returned their greetings half-heartedly, for the excitement in his brain was too great and worked its way out in a flush upon his face. He felt it, and like any one in those circumstances, he desired to speak as little as possible, and quickly made for the road and the ascending path.

Strange discussions took place in his mind, and often the arguments against the plans that a while ago he had felt to be unbreakable became so strong that he saw them in vague piles of wreckage. He would then stop on the road and think harder and deeper, but he found his plans well laid, after all the arguments were overturned, and the heat of controversy sent him quicker on his way. It was very quiet on the hilltop. He could hear the

boys at work in the fields and the girls playing tennis.

He paused a moment or two on the porch to look about, then entered the hallway and made his way up the stairs. On the second floor, at the end of the hall, Mr. Liton had a desk. Michael opened one of its drawers and dropped the bank book into it. As he turned to go down again, he heard a sound of someone walking on the floor above him.

Marguerite had fixed her dress and was about to return to the tennis lawn.

"Oh, Marguerite," he cried on discovering it was her. You are just the one I want to see. Come out on the porch, I have something very important I want to tell you."

"If they see us together, they'll be having lots of fun with us," thought Marguerite, but there was something about the expression of his face that brushed that thought away, and she followed him.

They sat down upon two rockers, near each other, and he hurriedly told her of a good fortune that had fallen to his lot during this one day's adventure, and carefully mapped out a plan of action, to which she was to be a partner, and which thrilled her girlish heart as girlish hearts are thrilled but once in their lives; and when Mother Atkins awoke and called the girls from the tennis lawn, the conversation was brought to a close by a hasty shower of words of endearment. Marguerite arose, for she was still at Tower Hill, and Michael embraced and kissed her fervently. She responded, and then rushed back into the kitchen, and he went out on his way to the barn.

Supper was made and the haymakers were called in from the field.

"Those who are in favor of," began Mr. Liton at the supper table, rising, from his seat, then pausing and smiling as the curiosity in each mind forced them to stare at him and wait patiently, "of—a moonlight hay ride tonight, signify by—"

He did not stop to take a vote nor to designate the manner of doing so, for the noise that followed was more of a vote than necessary.

Supper was eaten in a great hurry and the required work after it, was done with no less impatience.

Mr. Liton started for the barn, and Michael, taking the opportunity, dashed after him.

"Are you very anxious to take that ride to-night, Mr. Liton?"

"Why?"

"I would like to stay home and talk to you. I have many important things I want to tell you."

Mr. Liton was slightly disappointed, for he did want to go with them, but such a request from Michael warranted no procrastination. He merely answered, "All right then; we will stay by ourselves and do all the talking we want to."

The cries of the excursionists, the impatience of the horses and the rumbling sounds as the racks were pulled out and away, caused slight feelings of regret on the part of both Mr. Liton and his foster son; but the desire to hear, on the part of one, and the desire to tell, on the part of the other, dismissed this regret and sent them up to the second tower, to Mr. Liton's sanctum.

"I have so many things to tell you," began Michael, when Mr. Liton had seated himself in his desk chair, and he had drawn a rocker as close to him as possible, and had fallen into it, "I don't know where to begin."

Mr. Liton smiled but the flushed face of Michael worried him.

"Start anywhere."

"Do you remember Dick Kennen of Abolt School?"

"I think I do."

"He was sent there a little while after me. He is the boy that tried to run away and that Saunders kicked so hard that they had to operate on him."

"Oh yes, I remember now."

"I bought a newspaper while in the city today, and there on the front page was the heading, 'Boys at Reform School Assault Guards and Escape!' I read further and, sure enough, I found that Dick Kennen, with three other boys, had turned on Bloate and Reilly, almost killed them, and escaped. They haven't been found yet, but I know it will go hard with them when they are caught, and I know, too, that they are not to blame for what they did. If they are sent to prison there is no more hope for them."

"Dick used to be a good friend of mine. He and Skinny Lud, the boy that died at Abolt before you left, and I used to meet in a vacant lot near our street, under a rusty piece of tin, and there we had a camp. We used to steal things to eat and take them there, cook them on a fire, and have the meals that we couldn't get at home. Dick was a good boy. He did what he did, just as I and many others did what

we did, because we had to. We were hungry and we had no other way of getting something to eat.

Dick was the better boy of the two of us. He wasn't as mean and cranky as I was. He took everything good naturally and laughed at it, that is why you and Miss Britter helped me out and let him go, but he is a very good fellow, and I am sure if you could get him up here you'd make a good man of him."

Michael stopped for a reply.

"I am afraid it's going to be very hard. You see he is much older than you were when I got you away from Abolt, and his offense is a very bad one. I mean the authorities will not be apt to excuse it."

"Can't it be shown that I was really worse than he, but that decent treatment got me to see matters differently, and that had they been treated right they never should have done that? Can't it be shown how terribly they treat the boys there? Can't we show that Bloate and Reilly are brutes? Couldn't we, say Ernest and I, go to court and testify?"

"I'll tell you," said Mr. Liton after a few moments of silent thinking, "suppose you get together with Ernest and Jack and let Ernest write up a speech that will tell all that. He has a wonderful power of expressing himself in words on paper, and you can talk much better than he can. Let him draw up the speech, and you learn it. The three of you can think of a great many things about Abolt, I mean to show why Reilly and Bloate are brutes, and I will make for the city to-morrow, get a lawyer, and demand a trial for them, if they are caught, already. The lawyer can arrange for your telling your story."

Michael's excitement was great.

"When I come back," Mr. Liton went on, "I can look over what Ernest has written, and advise you as to changes, if any are necessary."

"There is something else, I want to tell you about to-night," Michael began again, hesitatingly.

"What is that?"

"On my way back from the city, I met a man who has a large estate in the Adirondack mountains. He has five children, who he said were not getting good education because the teachers they get there are fellows who have had nothing more than a country school education. Sometimes he said they can't even get a poor teacher. He said that he would be willing to pay out of his own pocket to add to the salary that the district gives if he could get a good teacher. After having a long talk with him, he said he would like to have me go there and teach for them. The district pays eight dollars a week, and he is willing to add four."

"You want to leave Tower Hill?"

"No, I hate to leave Tower Hill, but there is something else."

"What's that?"

"Marguerite and I have decided that we would like to work together the rest of our lives. We want to marry. We would like to go out there, get some experience in teaching, and come back and help you in this kind of work."

"Why couldn't you stay here and do the same?"

"We feel kind of funny about it. We wouldn't stay away more than a year. It would be different then. It would give us a chance to—"

"I understand perfectly—you're quite right. I don't blame you at all. I think it would be better.

Give you a chance to see the world by yourselves. You can come back afterwards; perhaps by that time I will be able to start another school like this, and you can help me.'

He stretched his hand out to him and Michael grabbed it and kissed it. "Here's to your future happiness and usefulness to those who are as good as we are, but whose chances are so much poorer that they go wrong. Remember Michael, if anything ever goes wrong, I am here of service to you, and even if I can't help you, I can think things over with you."

"I have no reason for ever keeping anything from you, Mr. Liton," said Michael, and because he could not express himself in words, Michael's eyes were dimmed with tears.

The sound of happy voices came in on the breeze and grew more distinguishable as the wagons came nearer, until they could hear the strains of "Home, Sweet Home." The wagon wheels, rattling up and down the knobby roads and through the echoing woods, brought the sleepy revelers to the gateway, and the two rushed down to meet them.

CHAPTER IV

ANOTHER TRAGEDY AT ABOLT

Dick Kennen, Sam Phelps, Louis Tifton, and Manuel Rogers had prolonged their terms at Abolt by attempting several escapes. After what they termed as a dog's age of waiting for their parole, on the very same day, each received a yellow piece of paper, on which the Superintendent of Abolt School claimed the honor to inform them that they had earned their parole.

They were all four called into the office, where they were surprised to find their parents waiting for them with suit-cases in their hands. They were ordered to put on the clothes that had been brought to them in the suit-cases and to leave those they had been wearing. It was an exciting bit of work and was done joyously.

Mr. Krammer stood over the little door, on the other side of which they were dressing, and watched. It was one of the Superintendent's policies not to allow a boy about to be paroled to see any of the teachers or his fellow inmates before leaving, and the boys had not been informed of having earned their parole until they were brought into the office and asked to change clothes. As it happened, a slight oversight on his part, he was sending away a completely organized clique.

Superintendent Krammer escorted them, together with their parents, to the gate of the institution grounds, shook hands with each of them, and rattled off a formula regarding honesty and virtue, which he had repeated so many times that it became

a matter for his second brain, and which they were entirely too excited to hear, even if it would have meant anything to them.

The parents, each thinking that his or her son was the best of the lot and liable to be tainted by the companionship of the others, tried to get them off alone, and succeeded only after they had exchanged their addresses. At home they continued the mistrust of their son's companions and warned them against their having anything to do with each other. But, aside from their friendship, born of a forced fellowship in bitter surroundings, wrought into unbreakable ties by common suffering, their neighbors' sons looked upon them as stained boys and refused to make friends with them. They soon found each other and continued their former companionship.

It was a matter of two months. Dick and Manuel were still without jobs, while Sam Phelps, working at his acquired trade as a plumber's helper, and Louis Tifton, employed as a clerk in a grocery store, found themselves drudging away twelve hours a day and half of Sunday, and contemplated relief.

One night, at ten o'clock, they met at a corner, since not one of their homes was available for such a meeting, and talked matters over; and there was not a person to hold them back when they started down a dark street with a definite purpose and plan.

Next morning they did not have to rise early and prepare for work, but were called by a jail warden and treated to a prison breakfast. The newspapers informed the public that four boys, just released from a reformatory, had broken into the closed home of a principal who was away for the summer, and looted it.

Not a thing was said about what forced them to do it, nor what their purpose was; nor did any judge look for that information. They had violated their parole and were shipped back to Abolt and, without formal or informal greetings, were incarcerated into Father Bloate's Cottage One.

A year went by without much of importance transpiring, and then it happened one day that Dick and Sam were ordered to take several wheelbarrows, full of ashes, from the kitchen to the other side of the power house and dump; and as they turned over the fifth load, being protected by the power house from an officer's guard, Dick sat down upon the handles of the barrow and began to vituperate the Colonel, with whom he had clashed on numerous occasions during the week. The Colonel happened to be talking to the engineer at the time, and catching the sound of boys' voices from their direction, walked up to a window and looked out, heard what they had to say, then turned, walked out, stole along the wall, listened more, and when he thought he had heard enough, suddenly jumped out upon them.

"Get up!" Colonel Reilly demanded of Dick, and when Dick arose shivering with fright, the Colonel struck him upon the mouth and knocked him down.

Dick cried, and his lips covered with blood, showed the desire to fight back. Colonel Reilly struck him again, then demanded that he take the barrow and go about his work, which he could not help but do.

At five o'clock that afternoon the boys were assembled in the long dining room talking away as noisily as ever. Father Bloate, who had been waiting for an opportunity to speak to the Colonel privately, caught him alone in the vestibule.

"Say," he whispered, "I think I have discovered a plot. I think Kennen and a few others at my cottage are going to try to escape to-night."

"Want me to lock 'em up?"

"I am not sure who the fellows are. I think a few of them will try it."

"I'll watch with you to-night."

"Good."

The sun was setting beyond the great hill toward the West, and some of the boys who looked in the direction of the two towers said to themselves, "Mr. Liton is there."

The late afternoon and evening caused the same duties to be performed that had made part of the routine since the institution was born, and its population, like a distant race, lived, changed, and passed away, and at ten o'clock the lights went out.

They waited until eleven, when everything was quiet, then pulled out their Sunday suits, which had been cleverly brought into the dormitories and hidden under the mattresses, put them on, made their ropes of sheets, and one after the other slid down. Sam Phelps, the last of the four to get on the window sill, heard Colonel Reilly and Father Bloate glide out through the door and attack the three already down, and saw how his comrades became mad with fright and made use of the heavy sticks they had hidden in the flower beds. He almost lost his reason when he heard Dick's club come down upon the Colonel's head with a crash that sent him to the ground, and saw Father Bloate run for his life; but there were no amends to make. The only hope lay in escape, and they dashed for the woods.

CHAPTER V

A LIVING PLEA AND LIVING EVIDENCE

How often fate in weaving the thread of its tragedies starts in a given circle of points; touches them in all their acts; fastens its hold upon the actors, and sends or drags them with burning enthusiasm or despair, time after time, over the same beaten ways, to glory or to ruin.

The great railroad station was as noisy as ever, and the many ants swarmed busily about the ant-hill, for eternity was not yet ended. Another crowd awaited another arrival of another train, and again some rushed to meet those they expected to see and others went on with familiarity.

From the second car of that train three men stepped down, and behind them, coming from the fourth car, a man, a woman, and a young man followed, and all were making for the dirty, gloomy children's court. A trial was to be concluded.

This was not to be an exciting trial. There were no accomplished murders to be tried, and no clever manoeuvres—no disgusting beastliness to be revealed. The crowd in attendance was therefore small, and the newspapers were disinterested. Yet four boys shivered under the sword of doom, and before them the gates of a prison were opened wide to swallow them as soon as the formalities were over.

They stood huddled together on a little platform and waited for proceedings to terminate in their dreaded doom, though they had no definite ideas as to just what that doom might be—they feared it,

because it was the unknown, nor stopped to think that "use lessens marvel," that prison horrors grow tame upon one and like opiates, become a necessity.

The horrified and dignified Mr. Krammer stood not far away and stroked his significant beard, as if the whole world had done his gentle soul an injustice. Near him stood the haughty Colonel Reilly, his power and importance greatly injured by a bandage about his head, and between the two, looking small but important, winced the *ideal* cottage father, Bloate, apparently anxious that prison justice be meted out to them.

Then suddenly the counsel for the defense introduced an interesting number of the programme, and caused the eyes of the Superintendent of Abolt, the man of over twenty years of experience to sparkle, caused him to stroke more nervously his well-groomed beard.

A young man, who knew that platform and that bench through bitter experience, walked up the few steps and faced the judge, the witnesses, and the audience.

A silence followed for a few moments, and Michael, adjusting himself nervously to the difference between this court and the one he was more used to on Tower Hill, having been informed that he is to tell his story from beginning to end, took a deep breath and began:

"Your Honor, four years ago I stood on this platform to answer to charges of stealing. That was the fourth time that I had to answer to the same charges, and some people said that it was in me to steal and that I should be sent away.

"I was living at the time in the city's slums, and my widowed mother and consumptive brother earned just enough to half feed themselves with poor food. Outside of that they didn't even have half enough to feed me with. I had to steal to get what kept me alive. One of the defendants there, Dick Kennen, another little fellow whom Abolt School has reformed forever with the aid of death, and myself stole co-operatively. We would get what we could and feed on it in the corner of a fenced-in vacant lot some distance from our homes.

"I was sent to Abolt School to be reformed. Your Honor, I know in my heart of hearts that we stole because we were hungry, and for no other reasons. From being hungry for mere bread one can rise to possess a hunger for potatoes, and on up to such things as satisfy the soul.

"On that vacant lot, Dick was the better boy of the two of us. I grew bitter and hated everybody. He always carried with him a little good nature, and I wish to show the court that it was that very good nature in him that makes him a defendant and me his defender.

"I came to Abolt School. The first step in my reformation was accomplished by the nurse that was there at that time. Because I did not know anything about saluting him, he gave me a dose of the worst chemical combination that was ever invented by a brutal mind, and he called it "Loafer's Mixture." It made me very sick, not only in body but in mind. I hated him with all the passionate hatred of which I was capable. I was under his care for two weeks and had it been two weeks more I should have been brought here on charges of murder. After those

two weeks I was placed in a cottage with thirty-two other boys, in charge of a cadet that was given the authority to beat his fellow boys with a stick or kick them whenever any of them did not obey him instantly. Mr. Bloate himself would never talk to us as if we were children, ordering us about as if we were dogs; and after his day off he would come back, drunk, and we then suffered indescribably."

The judge was resting his head on his right hand, his elbow on his desk. The last sentence startled him. He looked up at Superintendent Krammer with the two men beside him and then returned to his former position.

Michael went on: "Then, one day, for not dashing to the wash basin just as quickly as he wanted me to, Cottage Father Bloate struck me on the mouth with his fist, cutting my lip and breaking one tooth. I resented it and for doing so Mr. Reilly grabbed me by the shoulder on coming into the dining room and told me to sit down on the middle of the dining room floor. I was ashamed to do so before three hundred boys and my teachers, and for begging him not to make me do that, Mr. Reilly dragged me out into the vestibule, and there, with a heavy stick, beat me insensible.

"When I awoke again, I found myself in one of the coops, prison cells that they have, handcuffed to a board, with every square inch of my body a swollen wound. I still have the scars on my body and will show them to the court if your honor wishes me to."

The Judge made no answer and Michael went on:

"I hated everybody, and there was not a soul that I would have trusted. It was only when, in spite of my sulky way of answering, Miss Britter spoke to me kindly that she made me doubt my bitter conclusions and made me hope for some kind of relief.

"Instead of bothering my wounded heart with arithmetic, Miss Britter told me the story of David Copperfield, how he suffered so much and came out victorious in the end, and let me read the book; and for the first time in my life I began to feel that there is a something in this world that was not against me—something that is beautiful and worth fighting for.

"Then Mr. Liton came along and started a republic and made me a representative of a cottage. Like Miss Britter, he took an interest in me because I was bitter. Dick, who was by that time quite familiar with the ways of Abolt School, was too good-natured to rebel. He took matters as they were and tried to be happy, and was therefore left to the mercy of the institution. After I had worked with Mr. Liton a number of weeks and he led me into discussions and the writing of compositions for the magazine, I began to see the visions of a new life and a new world, and I determined to migrate there; but the moment Mr. Liton and his friends left, the place was turned into a hell, and all the flames that had been lit within me, I had to put out myself. My life for the next few months was unbearable, and young as I was, I planned suicide.

"I was standing near the flag-pole one late afternoon and saw the sun going down behind the old monastery towers, and a thought came into my mind. I resolved to escape that night and try to get

to those towers, for I knew that Mr. Liton had a school of his own there.

"My plans were well made and I got away, and as I vaguely hoped, Mr. Liton prevented their taking me back.

"Your honor, had Dick been the hating spirit that I was, some one would have interested himself in him, and perhaps he would not be in this court to-day.

"At Abolt, they always called us a *Bunch of Little Thieves*, and I tell you that sentence falls heavily upon any boyish heart, I don't care how bad people think he is. It fell so heavily on mine that I hate them for it yet, though Mr. Liton has taught me to forgive.

"Just a few more words, your honor. I was much worse than poor Dick ever was; if he had had half the chance I did, he would be a saint. I am no saint, nor am I half an angel, but from the midst of a hopeless *Bunch of Little Thieves* I have come to be among the class of human beings who see that some things are very wrong in this world, and who are anxious to sacrifice their strength—yes, and even their very lives—to help make that world better.

"I appeal to you to save these boys, who have had no chance in this world, not on the day they were born nor since, not even the late coming chance that I have gotten."

He stepped down and joined Mr. Liton.

"Dick Kennen, Sam Phelps, Manuel Rogers, and Louis Tifton," called the judge, "stand up. You are guilty of a grave offence, but, in view of the able defence of your comrade, I will suspend your sentence. You are to go with Mr. Liton and remain

with him while you behave yourselves and no longer.

"Your friend has made me feel that you have not been given a chance. I will give you that chance now. If years go by and you show that you can do the right thing, your offence and your sentence will be forgotten.

"This court stands adjourned."

CHAPTER VI

ABOLT SCHOOL AND TOWER HILL

The four grateful young men were taken to Tower Hill, fed, given a reception, and sent to work with the others. They soon discovered that doing the right thing, was not in formula alone, the most profitable; that a much greater amount of pleasure was to be gotten by doing what was right; and to surpass their wildest dreams, instead of losing their liberty as a sacrifice, they had fallen heir to all the freedom any soul could desire.

Two weeks after the episode that brought them to this veritable boys' heaven, an automobile drove up on the grounds of Tower Hill. Three gentlemen were in it and asked to see Mr. Liton.

They shook hands with him when he came from the fields in his overalls, and asked whether they could see the four boys whom the court had given to his care.

"Julia," called Mr. Liton, and in response came a little girl from the hallway. She was all excited from having been running, and with a sweet girlish expression on her face, after wiping off some of the round beads of perspiration, wished to know what he wanted.

"Will you, like a good girl, go to the cornfield and tell Mr. Rolan to send the four new boys up here at once?"

Julia started off on a run.

"Do you trust them out to work alone?" asked one of the gentlemen.

"Yes, sir, I make my home so dear to them that you can't drive them away. I believe that that is much safer than watching them. I have had no escapes since I came here, almost four years ago."

The men expressed their admiration and asked if they could look through the place.

"Certainly. You are welcome to see everything that is here."

The four boys arrived, dressed in their overalls, slightly worried as to what might follow. But they were soon assured that nothing was going to happen, and after the visitors had looked at them several times and smiled and looked at each other, they were sent back to work; and Mr. Liton took the men through the house, barn, and shop.

"Mr. Liton," began one of the men, when they had seen all they wanted to, "we are the new board of directors of Abolt School, and we have come here to ask you to accept Mr. Krammer's position. Mr. Krammer and all of his help that you may wish to get rid of, will go as soon as you can come and fill the positions that will be made vacant."

Mr. Liton smiled.

"That wouldn't mean that you would have to let this school go at all. With an automobile you can go from one to the other in a few minutes."

Through Mr. Liton's mind flashed a succession of beloved pictures. He could see the miniature plateau, the concrete cottages in the moonlight, or in a rain storm, the lawns, the gravel walks, with their whitewashed stones, the farm, the roads, the valleys, and the ruins of the dilapidated old house upon which one could rebuild.

"Are you willing to accept that position?"

"You say I can substitute the kind of teachers I want for the kind that are there, if after seeing them, I deem that necessary?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will be willing to pay good salaries that will attract good teachers?"

"As far as we are able."

"And you will let me get at those boys in whatever way I please and think necessary, if, at least, I convince you that that way is best?"

"If we didn't have confidence in your methods we never should have come here."

"Then I accept."

"When can you begin?"

"In two weeks."

"Good, we shall come for you."

They shook hands again very cordially, and the automobile took the road to Abolt and disappeared.

"Miss Britter," cried Mr. Liton when he was alone again.

"Who were they?"

"Miss Britter, you are speaking to no less a personage than the Superintendent of Abolt School, and I have the honor of addressing his Assistant."

"Julia, you run to the cornfield again and call Mr. Rolan and Michael, and the rest of the boys. Wait a minute, ring the bell a long time first; that will call all of them."

"Michael," he cried, as soon as the latter arrived, "I am to be the Superintendent of Abolt School."

Michael did not know what to make of it.

"Now tell me, which would you rather be, a teacher in the Adirondacks or a cottage father with

Marguerite as the cottage mother, at Abolt School?"

"The newcomer's cottage," cried Michael, beside himself with joy, "don't forget."

Mr. Rolan, followed by his boys, and Mr. Atkins and his boys, came upon the hill top to join the crowd, and Mother Atkins and the rest of the girls, hearing the racket, with dishes in their hands, rushed out and completed the family gathering.

"Children," said Mr. Liton, slowly, "I have been asked to be the Superintendent of Abolt School."

Mr. Rolan pulled the broad-brimmed farmer's hat off his head and waving it in the air, cried, "Come, everybody, three cheers for Abolt and its *Bunch of Little Thieves!*"

And, as the sun lowered down in the West, and the boys at Abolt were looking at it, and the two towers in back of which it sank, the cheers that followed shook the whole world, if what the little fellows about Mr. Liton said were true; and of all who cheered the four newcomers were the loudest.

END

AFTERWORD

"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

"She said no man, Lord, and Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more."

"A study of the homes and families of these children shows much more clearly than any tables of statistics how easily poverty in itself brings these children to the court. It is not merely by such direct means as stealing fuel from the tracks, or sleeping under a house to escape the discomforts of an over crowded home, that poverty brings its children into court. When we see all the wide background of deprivation in their lives, the longing for a little money to spend, for the delights of a nickel theatre, for the joy of owning a pigeon, or for the glowing adventure of a ride on the train, it is not hard to understand how the simple fact of being poor is many times a sufficient explanation of delinquency." —*Breckinridge and Abbott, in "The Delinquent Child and the Home."*

"The delinquent commits almost all kinds of offenses, but most of them are comparatively trivial and the rest largely indicate environmental source. Not more than 6 per cent. indicate abnormality. Probably not more than 1 or 2 per cent. of them are the actions of children criminal by nature."—*Dr. Thomas Travis, in the "Young Malefactor."*

"A really inferior child, an inherently vicious or imbecile child, or one who could not be much improved by better food and hygienic surroundings is a very rare exception."—*Hrdlicka, 47th Report of the N. Y. J. A.*

"If once in a while they act more like little devils, the opportunities we have afforded them, as I have tried to show, hardly give us the right to reproach them. And yet, looking the hundreds of boys in the Juvenile Asylum over, all of whom were supposed to be there because they were bad (though as I had occasion to ascertain, that was a mistake—it was the parents who were bad in some cases), I was struck by the fact that they were anything but a depraved lot."—*Mr. Jacob A. Riis, in "Children of the Poor."*

"The majority of criminals are not born, but made—and ill made. They can be remade as easily as the 'River Front Gang' was remade if we would use the methods of Christianity on them and not those of a fiendish paganism that exacts 'an eye for an eye' and exacts it in a spirit of revenge."—*Judge Ben Lindsey, in the "Beast."*

"And yet the boy murderers are of the same clay as the rest of us, but environment has moulded it differently, that's all."—*New York City Asst. District Attorney Frank Moss.*

"He is a victim of environment that is breeding social disease to which the community shuts its eyes. Deprived of opportunity for normal development, he becomes a criminal without knowing it."—*Ernest K. Coulter, Clerk of the New York Children's Court.*

"Investigation of the lives of reform-school boys always leaves the impression that, with possibly few exceptions, they are quite representative of the average active, normal boy, and the investigator usually ends his work with the overwhelming conviction that, after all, probably the only reason why he and his boyhood associates did not graduate from the same sort of an institution was the difference in their environment."—*Professor Edgar James Swift, in "Mind in the Making."*

Professor Swift then goes on telling of a most interesting questionnaire which was sent to a large number of teachers, lawyers, students, merchants, and ministers asking them (in effect) whether in their childhood they had committed any of the various crimes for which children fill the reformatories. It is impossible to quote more than a very small fraction of the answers received. We will just quote a few and hope that the reader will refer to Professor Swift's "Mind in the Making" for the rest.

He says in part: "The most serious offense with which the questionnaire dealt was stealing money. The subject was divided into two parts, taking money from parents and employers.

"About one-fourth of the teachers said that taking money from their parents was a more or less common occurrence. One-half of the students and

about two-thirds of the miscellaneous group made the same admission. A good number had no chance but are sure that they would not have hesitated had opportunity offered.

"I stole money in small amounts, usually fifty cents at a time, from the cash drawer of my father's store whenever I wanted it. (Teacher.)

"I used to keep part of the change when I was given money to buy things for the family. I saved up twelve dollars in this way to redeem a pledge for the payment of a bill about which my parents knew nothing. (Student.)

"I took money whenever chance offered. (Student.)

"Once I took as much as five dollars. (Teacher.)

"I took as much money as I thought would not be missed, usually fifty cents or a dollar. Once or twice I took larger sums, according to what I wanted to get with it. (Merchant.)

"When a close-fisted employer refused to let me have my clothes at cost, I pocketed enough of his change to bring my clothes down to cost mark. (Student.)

"I appropriated to my own use, without paying for them, toilet articles and other things. (Minister; at time referred to, he was employed in a drug store.)"

The great difficulty in the reformation of the "bad boy" is the overcoming of the ignorance, corruption, and immorality that often festers in the institution management. The reader is referred to the *occasional* exposé of such institutions in the newspapers—*occasional only* because iniquity wears armor, burrows in the dark, and looks pure and virtuous by daylight.

"I found that some of the police were guilty of cruelties to the boys, used language to them that is unreportable, and unconsciously taught the boys to hate the law and look upon us all as their enemies. Several boys complained to me that they had been beaten by the jailer, and I found on investigation that they had; and prisoners that had seen them beaten testified to it.

"——— He declared that the boys were liars, that I was 'crazy' and that conditions in the jails were as good as they could be. This reply was exactly what we wished. I demanded an investigation. *The board professed to be willing but set no date.* We promptly set one for them—the following Thursday at two o'clock in my chambers at the Court House—and I invited to the hearing Governor Peabody, Mayor Wright, fifteen prominent ministers in the city, the Police Board and some members of the City Council.

"On Thursday morning—to my horror—I learned from a friendly Deputy Sheriff that the subpoenas I had ordered sent to a number of boys whom I knew as jail victims had not been served. I had no witnesses. And in three hours the hearing was to begin."—*Judge Ben Lindsey in the "Beast."*

"The State is often as incompetent as the worst parents in its dealings with the young offender. This when we remember that some parents train their children to crime seems like rhetorical language. But many of the men most closely in touch with correctional methods will agree to the statement that the State is manufacturing criminals as fast as it can with its limitations.

"In the police court it is no uncommon sight to see the court room so crowded with children that there is not enough time to finish their cases that

day. Yet this is attempted. In five minutes the decision is made which starts the child on a new career. The writer has seen over eighty cases of children decided by a judge in one session of the court lasting from 9 A. M. to 2 P. M. No careful student would think of *classifying* a case in ten minutes, and yet this judge decides the fate of a boy's whole existence and does it in less time and attention than the ordinary woman takes to buy a roll of wall paper.

"In case a boy is sent to a 'reformatory' it is largely chance if his lot falls in a really good environment. *No matter how well equipped such an institution may be* and no matter how well intentioned the superintendent, if that overseer has not a personality amounting to genius the reformatory will be a vast machine which, though it permanently cure 50 per cent. of those who *ought not to be there*, will unfailingly brand and deepen the rest in delinquent life.

"In every correctional and eleemosynary institution belonging to the state, from the children's court up, the unfortunate influence of mercenary politics is seen. Incompetent officials are put in power. Wardens who are ignorant of their duties are put over hundreds of convicts. Grace Johnson reports politics as endangering the promising work of the state agent of Minnesota. Evan a chaplain can not be chosen without the interference of politics. Governor Odell is accused of attempting to put the reformatory at Elmira at the mercy of 'plum seekers.' Fetter at Cornell gives a list of such cases and cites as an example a commissioner of charities with no previous training appointed as a reward for political services. The same was attempted in Brooklyn and the judge was so bound by politics that he had to appoint the office seeker to draw the salary

and a philanthropic person to do the work."—*Dr. Thomas Travis in the "Young Malefactor."*

The following quotations are from The New York Call of Dec. 30, 1911. The writer possesses a copy of the article, which was an exposé of the conditions in a "well kept" reformatory. A copy of the article, together with affidavits testifying to its veracity, is also on file at the office of a state board of charities. This article consists of four long columns of charges, and is too long to reproduce in full here.

"BOYS BEATEN AND KICKED.—'The cries of the boys still rings in my ears,' one of the women who resigned told a ——— reporter yesterday. 'Scarcely a morning passed without one or more beatings, administered with rubber hose or bamboo sticks, by the superintendent or his assistant, Mr. ——— and Mr. ———.'

"'There was the case of ——— I shall not give you his name because his parents are even now ignorant of the cruelties which the boy has endured. He had been unruly for some reason and ——— dragged him down to the basement and beat him until the boy's shrieks rang through the whole building. Fearing that the boy might be beaten to death, ———'s wife rushed down and, throwing herself on her knees begged him to stop. Finally his wife threw herself upon him and by pinioning his arms forced him to stop.

"'The boy complained to the superintendent. He was sent to the *coop*, a cheerless attic room where, handcuffed, he lay on the bare mattress on the floor until released. He promptly ran away,' etc.

"It is also charged that the new and well equipped hospital was ostentatiously kept empty, although there were always boys in need of hospital treatment; this in order to impress visitors with the ex-

lremely healthy condition of the school. The boys who should have been confined there were in the meantime dosed in the basement of one of the cottages, where a nurse ran a so-called dispensary. The teachers unite in attributing at least one case of death to this neglect.

"'On November 6,' said a teacher, 'a boy of eleven, by name of _____ was brought to the office by his father, who was visiting him that day, and who requested that the child be sent to the nurse for treatment, as he appeared to be feverish and complained of pains in the chest. I promised to inform the assistant superintendent. This official gruffly instructed me to send the boy to drill, as usual, after which he would be attended to. It was bitter cold that day and the boy protested that he hadn't the strength to carry the gun, so I appealed for him again, backing it up with an appeal from the cottage father, all without avail, however. The boy was compelled to go through the entire drill. That night the child's fever rose so high that on my own responsibility I called a physician. He reported that it was merely a slight cold. The next day the fever showed no signs of abatement and the male nurse was called upon to attend to him. Several times when I entered the attic where he was confined I heard his shrieks, "Oh, don't hit me. I can't carry that gun." The nurse remained utterly unmoved by the child's suffering.'

"'This lasted for two days, the boy remaining neglected in the attic of a cottage, while the bright, well-equipped hospital stood conspicuously empty. But when it became evident that the child was sinking rapidly, he was removed to the hospital and his parents called from the city. They came in time to witness his death struggles. The mother went stark mad.'

"But perhaps the worst feature of the institution, according to the statements of several of the teachers who resigned, is that Superintendent _____ retains as attendants men and women known to be immoral and exercising a corrupting influence on the boys."

The following quotations from an article in the Philadelphia Times of February 20, 1913, give an account of an exposé of a similar institution.

THREE RESIGN AS PROTEST

Dr. _____, resident physician at the _____ Schools, his wife, head nurse at the institution, and her assistant have resigned from their respective positions at that institution, because of the failure of Superintendent _____ to carry out medical orders or recommendations.

The triple resignation came after sensational charges of cruelty to the boy inmates of the schools made by _____, of _____ street, father of the lad released by the officials of the institution after a fight lasting several months.

The boy's right foot is flat and his right leg is apparently shorter than the left. When he entered the hospital on June 24 he was physically sound. In fact he had previously won a marathon race from _____ avenue to _____ for boys under 16 years of age. It would be torture for the lad to run a yard at present.

He is unable to walk up steps without grasping a railing and literally pulling himself up. Dr. _____, _____'s father and mother and his playmates at the school are authority for the statement that when he entered the hospital there on October 11, 1912, to undergo an operation for appendicitis he was not lame. Dr. _____ further says that when

the boy was discharged from the hospital, December 11 or 12, 1912, he was not lame.

VICIOUS BRUTALITY CHARGED.—On January 3, 1913, according to the boy, he was kicked in the spine by _____, an official at _____. He fell to the ground and was unable to rise. He says _____ stood by and laughed at him. Later Dr. _____'s daughter called the physician's attention to the fact that the boy had a pronounced limp. The boy says he limped from the time he was kicked by _____.

Prior to this, the day after _____'s release from the hospital, and while still in a convalescent condition, he says that _____, instructor in tailoring, struck him in the head, grabbed him by the ear and threw him to the ground, at the same time punching him in the side over the scar left by the appendicitis operation. While the boy was on the ground, he says, _____ kicked him twice in the back.

The resignations of Dr. and Mrs. _____ and Miss _____ and the release of the _____ boy were preceded by a secret meeting of certain members of the committee on admission, indentures and probation. The members present were _____, president of the schools; _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____.

* * * * *

Mr. _____ says that the "monitor" of trustie system used at _____ is responsible for many of the numerous injuries to inmates. Under this system he declares boys have been so badly beaten that they have become insane. He says there is one boy at least in the _____ Asylum as the result of beatings, and another in an asylum at _____.

The boy now at the _____ Hospital for the Insane at _____, according to _____, is named _____. When he was admitted to _____, _____ says he had

eczema. A boy named —— is the one sent to the —— Insane Asylum, —— asserts. ——, a monitor in cottage No. 12, caused the injury which made —— insane, according to ——, by striking him in the head. —— says —— has stabbed another boy and is greatly feared by the lads in less favor with the officials.

* * * * *

When called, Dr. —— submitted his hospital records, which show that boys were brought to him with blackened and swollen arms, resulting from prolonged exercise. This is known as the "pumping punishment," according to young ——.

The records also show cases of boys being stabbed and others being beaten, while during the two years and a half Dr. —— was in charge of the hospital at the institution there were nine attempts at suicide. Mrs. ——, the physician's wife, who was head nurse, told of finding one boy hanging by a bed sheet tied about his neck. She also told of cases of frozen feet due to boys having been forced to scrub the basement in cold weather without shoes.

The physician was not questioned as to numerous other cases of alleged cruelty which came under his notice, among them injuries resulting from beatings, partial starvation and undue punishment.

"Truth is often stranger than fiction." In telling what has been or might be accomplished in the reformation of delinquents the truth seems so strange to most of us that we hesitate in believing it. Yet all who have made a genuine attempt have the same strange tales to tell. As time goes on and civilization becomes less of a sham, these strange tales will become more numerous and finally so numerous that they will lose their strangeness.

"When I first told one of our deputy sheriffs that in the future I should send boys to Golden without him, he said to my clerk: 'Well, I've always heard Lindsey was crazy, but I never believed it till to-day!' And when a hardened young criminal went, from my court, 250 miles to Buena Vista reformatory alone, and presented himself at the gates of the prison, 'the sentry' (as I was afterwards told) 'almost fell off the walls.'"—*Judge Ben Lindsey in the "Beast."*

Of all the strange tales that might be told here, the life of Owen Kildare as told by himself in "My Mamie Rose," is perhaps the strangest as well as most illuminating. Bereft by environment of parents and all the influences for good in the lives of other children, he was born to a life on the Bowery. He became a skilful thief, a loafer, idling around saloons and dives, and a prize-fighter. His habits, thoughts and desires, were the habits, thoughts and desires of the very lowest stratum of society. And yet, a few kind words from the lips of a little girl, a school teacher in his neighborhood, whom he had suddenly taken the notion to defend from the abuse of his comrades, fell upon him with a most irresistible force and finally led him to a place among the very highest members of his race.

"No shamefaced outcast ever sank so deep
But yet might rise and be again a man."

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